

WV DOT Today!



October 2022—Volume 4: Issue 10



Tell It Like It Is

On Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022, West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., testified before the U.S. Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works. Wriston was one of four state and local officials invited to testify before the committee concerning implementation of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Wriston was invited to testify before the committee by U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va. Capito is ranking minority member of the committee.

Others invited to testify before the committee included Delaware Transportation Secretary Nicole Majeski; Tuscon, Arizona Mayor Regina Romero; and Jim Tymon, Executive Director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

The bipartisan Committee on Environment and Public Works was instrumental in hammering out the compromise IIJA that was signed by President Joe Biden in November 2021. The law will

put \$550 billion into new transportation, infrastructure and broadband projects all over the United States.

Now that the IIJA is in place, committee members wanted to get insight from those on the ground concerning implementation of the law.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2.



Babydog Motorcycle * Page 3



Wriston Predicts Problems With Federal Infrastructure Law

CONTINUED.

The IIJA programs are vital to rural states like West Virginia which rely heavily on federal funding to plan and implement bridge and highway projects. West Virginia's portion of the funding includes \$506.6 million to improve more than 5,500 state bridges.

But while supporting the goals and vision behind the IIJA, Wriston predicted “almost absolute failure” of the discretionary portions of the act. Discretionary programs can create problems for rural states like West Virginia with large highway systems, including unpredictable funding levels, varying abilities of states to come up with matching funds and having to wait until money is actually awarded to start making serious plans.

Wriston expressed concern about coordination with different



federal agencies and conflicting information provided to state departments of transportation. West Virginia and other states have already run up against federal deadlines that came and went before federal guidance was issued on how to apply for funding and changing federal rules and requirements.

Members of the committee also expressed concern that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) might be making rules and regulations that aren't supported by the law.

Wriston urged members of the Committee on Environment and Public Works to help cut through the red tape and make sure the provisions of the IIJA are implemented efficiently and with proper guidance.



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.



Babydog Rides Cranberry Corridor

It was a day not even chicken nuggets could replace. Babydog was hard at work at her job applying smiles to the faces of West Virginians, when something unexpected happened.

Guy With Sunglasses suddenly swooped Babydog up from her super-awesome-chair-with-no-arms-that's-shorter (prepared for her by WVDOH District 1) and placed her on a Harley something-or-another with lots of chrome.

"People are always putting me places," thought Babydog. "Maybe after this we'll get chicken nuggets."

Babydog can read; that's something most West Virginians know but not many have considered. She stays up late reading press releases hoping for a groundbreaking ceremony for an innovative new restaurant that serves bone-shaped chicken nuggets on really short tables. So far, not yet. But she reads for fun in between and when she glanced over at the sign sitting beside her she realized it said, "Cranberry Corridor."

Cranberry Corridor is the third of the Mountain Rides routes to open this summer, Babydog knew that for sure. A partnership between Tourism and WVDOH, the idea is to tell the world about one of the best things in West Virginia — our perfectly picturesque curvy roads.

Sports cars can drive on these roads because WVDOH made them smooth and maybe that's why there are sports cars here, reasoned Babydog. And motorcy...

"Wait a minute! Is this? It is! This is a motorcycle!"

Realizing she was on a motorcycle, Babydog broke into a big smile.

"I've never ridden a motorcycle before," thought Babydog. "This is the best day ever!"

Inspired to try something new, Babydog started thinking about Cranberry Glades, Beartown, and little restaurants that serve home cut fries with their chicken nuggets. As a world of possibilities opened up, Babydog smiled. When she smiled, everyone smiled. When everyone smiled, she smiled some more and soon all of West Virginia was smiling.



Carrollton Covered Bridge Update

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) bridge crews in Barbour County are making good progress on the restoration of the Carrollton Covered Bridge, which was badly damaged by a fire in 2017.

“We’re moving along pretty quick at this point and they’re getting to see the fruits of their labor,” said WVDOH District 7 Bridge Engineer Chad Boram, P.E. “I think they’re enjoying it.”

The bridge, the third oldest of 17 surviving covered bridges in West Virginia, was badly damaged by a fire in August 2017. The blaze destroyed much of the outer covering of the bridge but left the basic structure mostly intact.

The WVDOH was able to reopen the bridge to traffic in September 2017 after minor repairs to the modern bridge superstructure to ensure the bridge was safe. Consultants then developed plans on how to best restore the structure.

Work began in July with a thorough pressure washing. Once the bridge crews could see what they were dealing with they began to replace damaged sections of the bridge’s wooden superstructure.



A team of half a dozen or so has been steadily at work since then, cutting and shaping new bridge beams and replacing burnt timbers. Although Boram said most of the main wooden arch can be saved, “A very good portion of the truss is going to have to be replaced.”

The WVDOH originally planned to hire a contractor to restore the historic structure, but instead decided to do the work with local WVDOH crews.

The bridge was built in 1856 by brothers Emmett and Daniel O’Brien and crosses the Buckhannon River near Carrollton. At 140 feet, it is one of the longest surviving covered bridges in West Virginia. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

West Virginia’s covered bridges were largely built of hemlock and poplar cut on site. In the 1800s these trees were abundant in the state.

Boram hopes to complete restoration work on the bridge by the spring of 2023. The project is expected to cost about \$1 million, and is completely funded with federal dollars.

Did You Know?

Access to your central HR File

Most employees don’t know this but requesting a copy of your personnel file is quite simple. The Administration Section within Human Resources Division (HR) will provide you with the form upon request. We ask that employees pick up the hard copy of the file otherwise the file will have to be redacted if mailed and we only will mail to the address we have on file. If the employee is located out in the districts, we can make the file available through our file sharing program and the employee can pick it up at their local HR office. Employees will also have to provide photo identification.

The Administration Section is here to assist our fellow employees. Call the main office at 304-558-3111, or send an email to: Shawn.M.OConnor@wv.gov.

Iron Mountain Storage

The West Virginia Department of Administration (WVDOA) and the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) along with other state agencies are working together to reduce the number of files stored at Iron Mountain storage facility.

The WVDOA has procured space on Smith Street for agencies to use while reviewing records stored at the facility. Agencies can now have their records retrieved from storage and delivered to their designated space for review.

Human Resources Division’s Administration Section has been working on this project and at some point, will be reaching out to the Divisions for guidance on files that are not on the retention schedule or when the appropriate retention period cannot be determined.



Dooley Noted: Where We Are

Editorial.

October 2022. It's been five years since the Roads to Prosperity bond vote (October 7) and one year since Governor Jim Justice appointed Jimmy Wriston, P.E., as Secretary of Transportation (October 4.) Human Resources Division coordinated their best conference yet. Natasha White identified the theme as Star Trek, but if I had to name it, it was the One for All, All for One Conference.

The reoccurring theme that ran through every speakers work was togetherness. From Natasha's own epic speech, to Bonita Mitchell's presentation on burnout, to Jennifer Ballard's on succession planning, there was not one presenter who did not thank another person or section, offer specific compliments and praise to another or otherwise shine a light on another's work. It was the Lift Each Other Up Conference. It was a moment of arrival for the culture of West Virginia Department of Transportation; where The Vision is possible and within reach because we're reaching for it together. Literally every speaker, every presentation, reflected what we feel daily as an organization.

We just worked through a pandemic. We're super thankful to be here. Our goals were big; they could have gone off track; we're super thankful they did not. We showed up to empty buildings

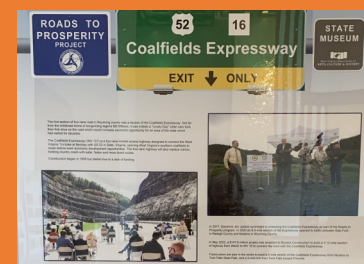
and met on tiny screens; staggered shifts to arrive before sunup to keep Transportation Workers safe in crew cabs and we relied on each other.

The leadership of Secretary Wriston and State Highway Engineer Alan Reed, P.E., absolutely reflect throughout the agency, and that leadership is one of empowerment, so that now there are leaders in every department and leaders on the ground. It is not that someone else will do whatever needs done. It is that whoever you are, wherever you are, you can do it.

Speaking from the vantage point of division level management, Randy and I look around at our peers and there is not one who cannot and does not daily point out the accomplishments of their employees. Our own employees — Rusty, Troy and Lindsey — are each doing all that will fit in a day because there's so much good we can do and we want to. Randy and I look around and listen and we hear each manager we speak to talk the same way about their employees. They know the good, because people come in empowered every day, just waded through the tough parts. In the midst of earnestly trying to do their best, they shine even when they don't realize they're shining.

I can honestly say: I enjoyed the presentations at the Human Resources Conference. It was a snapshot of where we are as an organization right now and I'm proud to be a part of this.

5 Years of Roads to Prosperity



Stop by the Culture Center on the Capitol Complex to view the exhibit celebrating five years of Roads to Prosperity; made possible by a partnership between West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History and WVDOT.

Special thanks to Randall Reid-Smith.



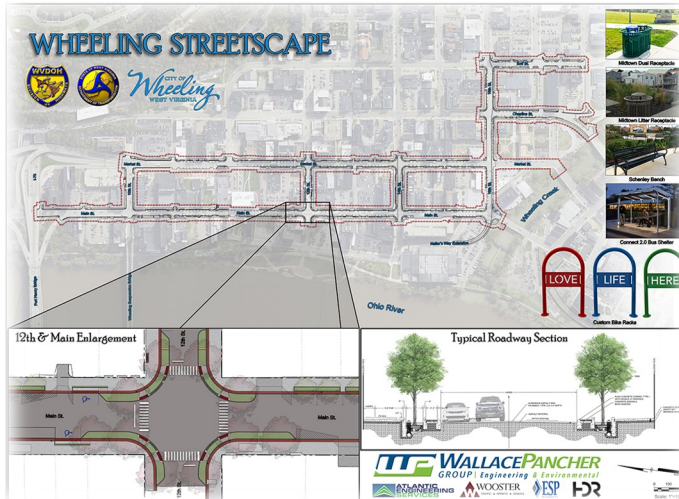
Groundbreaking Held For Wheeling Streetscape

On Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice joined West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) officials for a ceremony to celebrate the start of the Wheeling Streetscape project.

Work is scheduled to begin the second week of October on the nearly \$32 million project. The streetscape will widen sidewalks, add decorative brickwork, ADA-compliant curb cuts, decorative lighting and traffic signals, and plants and trees along Main and Market streets in downtown Wheeling between 10th Street and 16th Street.

"This has been needed for way too long," Gov. Justice said. "I could not be more excited to get the ball rolling on this project, which is tremendously important to the City of Wheeling and the entire Northern Panhandle. This is a vibrant, wonderful community that's important to our state. At the end of the day, I promised that we were going to get this done, and now we're getting it done."

The City of Wheeling is contributing \$1.9 million for construction work on the project and \$100,000 toward design and engineering. Additionally, the WVDOT has been awarded a \$16.25 million federal RAISE grant for the project.



Gov. Justice expressed his support for the project in June 2020, meeting with WVDOT officials, State Senator Ryan Weld, and Wheeling Mayor Glenn F. Elliot Jr. The bid was approved for the project in August 2022.

"This is another perfect example of a really important project that was lagging during the development process," said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "The Governor announced that we were committed to this project, and that we had made sure the funding was there for the project. And lo and behold, here we are today, unveiling another crucial infrastructure project."

Work will begin with drainage structures. As part of the streetscape project, storm and sanitary sewer systems

will be separated.

"This project is the most exciting thing to happen in Wheeling in 20 years," Mayor Elliott said. "This wouldn't happen without the Governor stepping up to say it's getting done. When it's done, it's going to be the most pedestrian-friendly downtown in the state. This wouldn't have happened without the Governor stepping up."



Meet Your Chiefs and District Heads



We tried to round up all of the West Virginia Division of Highways' (WVDOH) Division Chiefs and District Engineers at a recent meeting in Charleston. They're a busy lot, and not all were able to stick around for the photo session. Say hello to those who could, and we'll introduce you to more down the road.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Lee Thorne, District 5 Engineer; Arlie Matney, District 1 Manager; Greg Bailey, Chief Engineer of Operations; Todd Rumbaugh, Chief Engineer of Construction; Brian Cooper, District 7 Engineer; Marvin Murphy, Executive Assistant to the Agency Head; Doug Kirk, Chief Engineer of Environmental Compliance; Justin Smith, District 3 Engineer; Alan Reed, State Highway Engineer; Rob Pennington, District 2 Engineer; Jamie Rossi, District 8 Engineer; Joe Pack, Chief Engineer of District Operations; Jim Moore, District 9 Engineer; Tony Clark, District 6 Engineer; Ryland Musick, District 10 Engineer; Michael Cronin, (former) District 4 Engineer.

Stay tuned for more in coming issues.

Thank You. WVDOT

Dear Mr. Wriston,

I think the roadways look so much better with the canopy cutting; many others do not understand what a difference it makes in the wintertime. I applaud you for doing this and it is my hope that each county in WV will have this maintenance done for their roadways.

There has been no damage to my vehicle, and hopefully there will not be. Thank you again for your attention, as it is sorely needed.

Catherine F. Frye

To whom it may concern,

We just want to thank you at the WV Division of Highways located in Princeton for taking such great care of those of us who live down 901/70, Rocky Branch Road in Lerona, WV. We cannot thank you enough for all the good work from your work crews.

We are truly blessed for you taking such great care for us. Please forward this on to those who are in charge and to the crews who do all the work.

Thank you again,

Gary and Linda Cunningham



Supplemental Budget Allotment Pays for Over \$60 Million in Paving Projects

On Monday, Sept. 12, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice called a special session of the West Virginia Legislature to request \$150 million in supplemental funding for the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH).

Gov. Justice requested, and the West Virginia Legislature approved, the budget supplement, which included \$125 million for paving projects and \$25 million for new equipment.

Anticipating the Legislature would approve the budget request, the WVDOH has used a portion of the funding to pay for more than \$60 million in paving projects completed earlier this summer and into fall. The WVDOH is using the money for an aggressive paving program that will pave more than 830 miles of the Mountain State's roads.

"The WVDOH is very appreciative of Governor Justice and the Legislature's decision to allow this additional secondary road paving funding transfer," said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief Engineer of District Operations. "This allows us the opportunity to improve the roads for the citizens of West Virginia."

WVDOH maintenance crews did such a good job filling potholes and performing other maintenance on the state's secondary roads in the spring that those roads were ready to be paved



when the summer paving season started. Maintenance work outpaced the funding for paving.

Not wanting to lose a paving season, the WVDOH began paving those roads anyway, hoping that the Legislature would approve additional funding. So far, the WVDOH has completed paving on more than 290 miles of secondary roads in all 55 counties.

Roads paved so far and paid for through the supplemental budget appropriation include a \$1 million paving project on Kellys Creek in Kanawha County, \$900,000 in paving on Clear Fork Road in Raleigh County, \$400,000 in paving on Sweetwater Road in Wayne County, \$1.8 million in paving projects on US 250 and

surrounding roads in the Belington and Philippi area in Barbour County, and \$1.1 million to repave part of WV 2 in Marshall County.

By mid-September, work had been completed on 164 of 343 planned projects and about 300 miles of new asphalt.

"We've got paving going on every day," Pack said.

Paving projects scheduled for early October include a \$405,000 project on Cabin Creek Road in Kanawha County, \$490,000 to pave Fink Creek Road in Lewis County, and \$883,000 to pave WV 20 from Craigsville to Cottle Road in Nicholas County.



Cramer vs. Cramer: Couple Retiring After 30 Years

You may have noticed that Dave and Cindy Cramer – in addition to both being P.E.s – have the same last name.

It's not a coincidence. They happen to be married. And they actually met at the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT).

"One of the jobs she turned down was offered to me," said Dave Cramer, Director of Transportation Economic Development.

He met his future bride at the job interview. "It worked out well for me," he conceded.

Cindy Cramer, Director of the Traffic Engineering Division, concedes it worked out well for her, too. But the couple is retiring at the end of October after 30 years of service.

Traffic Engineering oversees everything from road signs to management of the Transportation Management Center. Cindy



Cramer supervises about 90 employees.

And Dave Cramer?

"Counting myself, there is one," he said.

Cindy Cramer's proudest accomplishment is development of the Transportation Management Center and West Virginia 511, which keep track of road conditions and accidents statewide.

"Highway safety is a passion for me," Cindy Cramer said. "There is not one person in this state that travels that the dark and tragic side has not touched at some point. When I started, we were looking at fatality numbers in the range of well over 400. That has dropped – it fluctuates – to between 250 and 275.

"Those are people that are going home to their families, and it's just that horrible loss they are not experiencing at such a great rate. That's very meaningful to me."



Want to know more?

WV on the DOT podcast episode 112 features Cindy and Dave!

Visit transportation.wv.gov and click on Podcast!

Follow WV on the DOT on Soundcloud!



"Phones Down" is a Nationwide Issue

Distracted driving is not just an issue in West Virginia. All over the country, traffic fatalities have been increasing in recent years. According to a study conducted by QuoteWizard, over 46,000 people died in car crashes in 2021, the highest number killed since 2008. Traffic fatalities were up 9 percent nationwide and 12 percent in West Virginia compared with 2020. The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) received this letter from Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Director Patrick McKenna.

MoDOT

Missouri Department of Transportation
Patrick K. McKenna, Director

105 West Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 279
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

LINK: www.mo.gov (275.6676)

September 14, 2022

Dear State DOT leaders,

By now, the words 'Buckle Up Phone Down' should sound familiar to you all. But my hope is that they echo in the minds of each driver every time they get behind the wheel. That's why I'm asking for your help. On October 21, MoDOT is celebrating its sixth annual Buckle Up Phone Down Day to bring awareness to the movement and its two simple, life-saving actions. As we continue to strive toward positive change in driver behavior and zero fatalities, we can start with a targeted effort this BUPD Day.

Despite tremendous advances in technology and millions invested in educating motorists, the annual loss of life on our nation's roads is staggering. One of the successful efforts we continue to promote in Missouri is an emphasis on personal responsibility in our BUPD initiative, which tackles two of the most effective actions drivers can take to stay safe when getting behind the wheel – fastening their seatbelts and putting down their cell phones. The movement contains a simple message with life-saving results.

The BUPD movement has expanded its reach across the country, thanks in large part to your participation. Your promotion of this initiative is a vital step in our effort to get this message in front of every American driver. It's their behavior that directly impacts the highway safety trends we see, and it's time we trend in the right direction. This year, we're asking you to ramp up that effort as we approach Oct. 21 to make BUPD Day a zero-fatality day on our roadways.

Our BUPD Starter Kit includes all the tools to create or supplement your messaging, or simply use as inspiration for your own take on BUPD. You can access this kit and find contacts for additional guidance at [mmdot.org/bupd-starter-kit](https://www.mo.gov/bupd-starter-kit). Join in the social promotion and conversation by using the hashtags #BUPD and #BUPDDay.

Start now and say it often: Buckle Up Phone Down. Join us in this undertaking of encouraging every driver to buckle up and put their phone down. Together we can continue making BUPD a common phrase uttered in the highway safety sphere, and more importantly, in every vehicle across the country.

Sincerely,


Patrick K. McKenna
Director



Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that is safe, innovative, reliable and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri.
www.mdot.org

HEADS UP PHONES DOWN



Greyhound to Stop at Bluefield Transfer Station



Officials with the Bluefield Area Transit Authority (BAT) recently confirmed an agreement with Greyhound to use the Larlyn Patrick McKinney Bluefield Area Transit Regional Transfer Station as an official Greyhound bus stop.

When the \$3.2 million transfer station was built, using funding through Gov. Jim Justice's Roads to Prosperity program, BAT officials intended that the state-of-the-art facility would also serve as a Greyhound stop.

Greyhound District Manager Brett Gaj (at right in photo, along with BAT General Manager John Reeves and Assistant Manager Olivia Lawson) said he was excited about the change.

"The current Greyhound stop is a bench on the street," Gaj said. "This will provide passengers with a warm, safe and dry facility to wait for a bus."

VISION AWARDS

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

Ron Hammond—District 2

Steve Bircheat—District 2

Jonathan Frye—HR

Taylor Thompson—District 1

Carry "Chicken" Payne—District 1

Shantel Hudgins—Civil Rights Compliance

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.



Work Progressing on Laneville Bridge

Work is complete on the installation of a temporary replacement for the Laneville Bridge in Tucker County. Construction began on the temporary structure the first week of October 2022.

The old bridge has been taken down and is being cut into pieces for removal.

The bridge, which provides access to the community of Laneville, the Red Creek trailhead, Dolly Sods Wilderness and other recreational facilities, is a key connection between Randolph, Tucker, and Grant counties. The bridge was built and is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service, but is on a road maintained by the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH).



The bridge was closed on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, after safety issues were discovered in a routine inspection.

The Forest Service contracted with A.L.L. Construction, Inc. to replace the bridge. The temporary bridge will restore access until a

permanent bridge can be built.

The new temporary bridge opened to traffic on Friday, Oct. 7, 2022, three weeks ahead of schedule.

The WVDOH has agreed to design a permanent bridge to be built downstream of the existing span once the temporary bridge is constructed. The Forest Service intends to pay for the new bridge with funding from the Great American Outdoors Act.

South Branch Valley RR Recognized for Safety Record

The South Branch Valley Railroad (SBVR), owned and operated by the state of West Virginia, is among more than 300 short line railroads around the country to be recognized for its exemplary safety record.

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association named the railroad as a recipient of the 2021 Jake Jacobson Award – with distinction – for an injury-free work year.

The SBVR comprises a 52.4-mile route from Petersburg to Green Spring where it links to the CSXT mainline connecting Cumberland, MD to Martinsburg, WV. Crossing Hampshire, Hardy and Grant counties, the SBVR serve the towns of Romney, Moorefield and Petersburg. The line operates freight service and is the rail bed for the Potomac Eagle excursion train.

The SBVR provides service to the Grant County Industrial Park, Petersburg; Moorefield Industrial Park; and Hampshire County



Industrial Park, Romney. The SBVR's largest customer is Pilgrim's Pride in Moorefield. Pilgrim's feed mill receives corn and other commodities used in the manufacture of its poultry feed. Three customers are located in Petersburg. Greer Lime ships outbound loads of lime to power stations and steel mills. Allegheny Wood Products ships finished lumber. Adell Polymers receives load of plastic

pellets. Total carloadings average between 3,800 and 4,000 per year.

The Jake Jacobson Awards are named for the late Lowell S. "Jake" Jacobson, the former president and general manager of the Copper Basin Railway. After achieving a perfect safety record for the CBRY in 1993, Jacobson realized that there was no award that recognized smaller railroads' safety records. So he created an awards program to honor his fellow small-railroad colleagues and their commitment to safety.



DMV Peer Recognition Extends Past DMV

Dear Secretary Wriston:

As DMV's Public Relations person, as well as their new Wellness Coordinator, I am a firm believer in showing up to work everyday and doing your best, focusing on TEAM (and not "I") for the betterment of the agency and state, and encouraging the peers around you who are doing a good job. While that third piece -- encouragement/occupational recognition -- is not the main focus of our organization, I DO believe it can be a useful and engaging tool in any environment to inspire people to do their best work, make lasting impacts, and establish and maintain higher employee morale as a whole.

My Health Promotion Committee here at DMV started a peer-to-peer recognition program two weeks ago. So far, employees seem to be enjoying not only the opportunity to earn their own recognition, but to also be able to "shout out" or recognize others!

To that point, I wanted to recognize one of your employees.

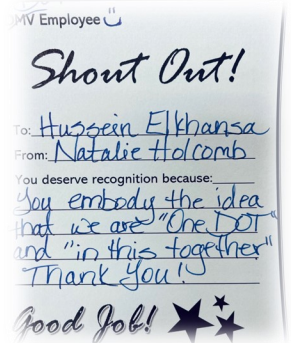
Every time Mr. Hussein Elkhansa steps foot into our DMV

Headquarters, he is kind and outgoing, friendly to all, and laser-sharp focused on making DMV and DOT the BEST place to visit and work. He uses phrases like, "We are all in this together," and "We are all one agency and we will work together to make DMV and DOT better." He is firm in his belief that together is better, and that regardless of circumstances, if we all "pull the rope together", as Governor Justice would say, the sky's the limit for the successes our agency and division can have.

I just wanted you to know that his hard work, attitude, and vision for the agency as a whole, is very much appreciated and commendable.

Sincerely,

Natalie Holcomb



THANK YOU!



The Kanawha County Commission would like to offer our sincere thanks to Secretary Wriston, with the West Virginia Department of Transportation and Governor Justice for their expeditious response to our recent request for repairs of flooded roadways in Sissonville. Their professionalism and courtesy are second to none!



October is Pedestrian Safety Month

The West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is joining with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in observing October 2022 as National Pedestrian Safety Month.

The benefits to our physical and mental health, as well as the environmental benefits of walking can lead to healthier, quieter, cleaner, and safer streets. Walking can also improve local economies and enhance social and community engagement, which can lead to more vibrant, resilient, and livable spaces. At some point every day, everyone is a pedestrian. Whether you walk your child to school or walk from your vehicle through a parking lot to the office or shop, each of us walks where vehicles travel.

But pedestrian fatalities remain high. In 2020, 6,516 pedestrians died nationwide. In West Virginia, 18 pedestrians were killed by drivers in 2020. Pedestrian deaths accounted for 17 percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide in 2020 and 2 percent of all people injured in crashes in 2020. For these reasons, the GHSP and NHTSA are strengthening their endeavors to improve safety for vulnerable road users. The GHSP's efforts are part of a statewide, multi-disciplinary undertaking that incorporates enforcement, education, emergency medical services, and engineering-related strategies.

"We often think of urban areas as more dangerous for pedestrians. We are seldom more vulnerable than when walking in cities, crossing busy streets, and negotiating traffic. Rural areas can be just as dangerous to walk in, if not more so, as many areas have no sidewalks, crosswalks, or safe spaces for walking," said Amy Boggs, GHSP Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Coordinator.

When driving, help keep pedestrians of all ages safe:

- Watch for pedestrians at all times; be extra cautious when backing up.
- Do not drive under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at crosswalks.
- Obey all traffic laws, especially posted speed limits in school zones.
- Pay attention. Put your phone down and never drive while distracted.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, making eye contact to indicate that you see them.

"Since everyone is a pedestrian from time to time, it's important

to pay attention to what is going on around us. As both pedestrians and motorists, we all need to pay more attention to our surroundings. Vehicles are deadly weapons and, when combined with a pedestrian, can be deadly. That's why the GHSP is sharing information on pedestrian safety this month," Boggs continued.

Follow these tips to stay safe as a pedestrian:

- Pay attention. That means: Head Up, Phone Down.
- Stay alert. Don't wear ear buds.
- Avoid alcohol and drug impairment when walking.
- Children younger than 10 should cross the street with an adult.
- Cross streets at crosswalks.
- Follow the rules of the road.
- If no crosswalk is available and your view is blocked, move to a place where you can see oncoming traffic.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing the street, making eye contact with drivers of oncoming vehicles to make sure they see you.
- Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots.
- Wear bright and/or reflective clothing and use a flashlight at night.
- Whenever possible, walk on the sidewalk; if no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic.

Distracted walking incidents are on the rise, and everyone with a cell phone is at risk. More than half of distracted walking injuries occur in our own homes, proving that we need to stay aware of our surroundings whether indoors or out. We are losing focus on our surroundings and putting our safety at risk. The solution is: Stop using phones while walking, and not just in crosswalks and intersections.

"Most pedestrian-involved crashes are preventable. The bottom line is, all road users need to pay attention, not be distracted or impaired, and slow down," Boggs concluded.

For more information about pedestrian safety, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety>.

For more information about the West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program, visit highwaysafety.wv.gov or call 304-926-2509.

