

WV DOT Today!



On June 17, WVDOH Equipment Division in Buckhannon conducted a training on our new Aspen A-52 bridge inspection truck. The truck was decked out in bright yellow, for a rainy morning and a sunny afternoon. Bridge inspectors don't choose "the weather" off any excuse list; they work

"I go some places and they sleep..."

in all seasons. "This morning it was raining during the training," said Chad Robinson, P.E., "Nobody complained, they just put their rain

gear on and got out here and did what they had to do."

The can-do attitude of West Virginia bridge inspectors also made an impression on Keegan McNally, from Aspen Aerials, who had travelled across the country to instruct WVDOH folks on proper use of the new equipment. "Everybody has been extremely willing to learn, and wants to keep the state equipment in good working order, so they're listening to me and paying attention to what I have to say," said McNally. "I go some places and they sleep."

"Every single person has been willing to listen to my instructions and get things done," said McNally. "It's been great. I was just talking to someone about that a little bit ago, actually. And, it's a beautiful state. I love it out here."

We wear masks to protect each other from a preventable illness, to protect West Virginia's economy, and to keep us strong and free.



Also in this Issue:

Route 35 Update

Cited: Speeding in Work Zone!

The Leader In You

More Gradall Yellow



The Leader in You

By Byrd White,
Secretary of Transportation

What does a good leader do and how do they do it? In these articles I will explain, based on my experience and observations, my answer. Not the only answer, just my answer.

Each of us in our own way is, or can be, a leader. At work with our fellow employees, at home with our children, at church, at an athletic event, in our everyday life we all, in some way, can be a leader. You have heard the phrase “He’s a born leader.” I don’t buy that. Being a good leader is like most other things, it takes effort.

In my view the most important trait a leader must have is Integrity. Simply put: “Do the right thing.” A leader without integrity will ultimately fail. Every day we are faced with challenges, we are tempted to do the wrong thing. Good leaders do the right thing. They may stumble, they will make

mistakes, but they always try to do the right thing. Many times we are faced with choices and we believe that we don’t know what is right. I have found that most of the time the more difficult, harder choice, is the right one.

Integrity is not just being honest; it is much more than that. A person with integrity will not take advantage of another in a weaker position. A person with integrity will not belittle or harass a subordinate just because they can. A person with integrity will tell you the truth, even when you don’t want to hear it. A person with integrity is considerate of others. A person with integrity cares about others. A person of integrity doesn’t believe in “good enough.” A person of integrity does the best they can do, every day, every time.

As I look back on my career, the people who I respect are the ones that did the right thing even when it hurt them. Even when it cost them money. Even when it took more time. Even when no one else knew or cared. They didn’t take shortcuts. They did the right thing, they had Integrity.



Photo by Randy Damron.

WV DOT Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Department of Transportation and distributed statewide via email to a strong network of the best employees on earth. All content is developed by the editor, unless otherwise credited. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WV DOT employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Department of Transportation**. Working together, we can give West Virginia the transportation systems it deserves and be a driving force in building the economy West Virginia should have — it’s all connected. WV DOT Today! welcomes you to write in and share your thoughts.

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We are recognizing our people.



WVDOH Employee Cited for Speeding in a Work Zone!



By Randy Damron.

DOH worker cited for speeding in work zone? No. Not this time. But it does happen, and that's a headline nobody in our organization wants to see. Being cited for speeding in a work zone would be more than an embarrassment, so don't allow this to happen to you.

As WVDOH employees, we should always lead by example and that includes our driving habits. We need to be mindful in state vehicles, but also in our personal vehicles. We are WVDOH employees at all times.

Speeding in work zones increases your chances for serious accidents involving our road workers, equipment and ourselves. Even the best case scenario is higher insurance rates, who wants that?

National statistics from 2018 show that of fatalities in work zones, 755 were motorists and 124 were workers. In West Virginia, in that same time period, 12 fatalities were motorists and 3 were workers. We always assume that work zone safety only refers to protecting the workers, but we risk our own lives and the lives of our passengers when we race through work zones.

These accidents can truly be avoided by simply paying attention to the job at hand — driving — and by following the signage and keeping in mind that speed limit signs are not suggestions. It's the law!



You no doubt have heard the expression “the life you save may be your own.” Well, it's true.

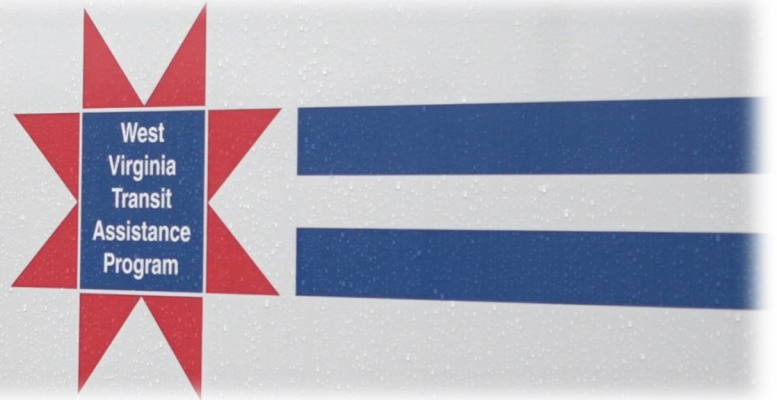
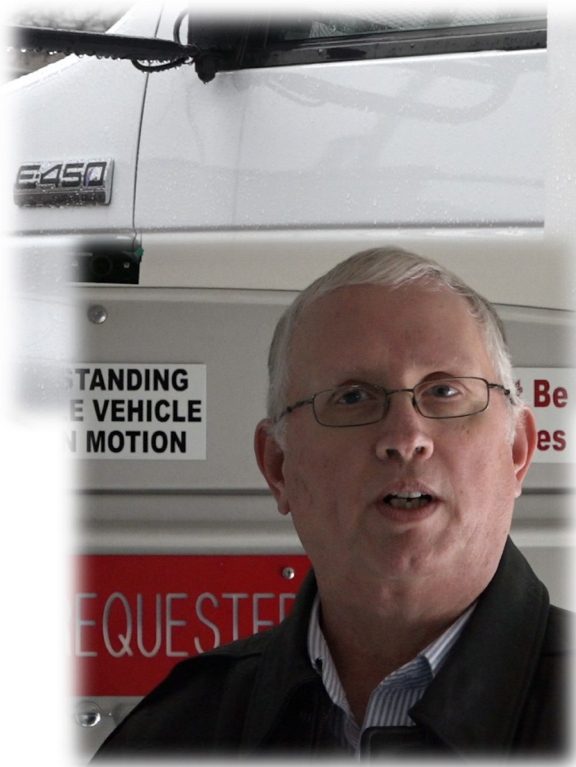
Work zone statistics from the America Traffic Safety Services Association show that distractions have become the major reason for work zone accidents, which comes as no surprise because we are doing more inside the vehicle than just driving.

If you're ever in the area around the Williamstown welcome center on I-77, please visit the West Virginia Workers Memorial for a solemn reminder of why work zone safety is paramount. Our work zone safety

theme this year is **“Heads Up; Phones Down.”** It's a great habit to practice, so please take it with you and share it. When you help make others aware of the importance of work zone safety, you may be saving a life.



Public Transit: Moving People, Meeting Needs



By Bill Robinson, Director

One of the most important programs utilized by the Division of Public Transit to provide safe, efficient and timely transportation to the traveling public is the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (programs in transit world always start with “53” because that is the section of the law where they are authorized.)

This program provides funding from the Federal Transit Administration to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Funds are apportioned based on each state’s share of the population for these two groups. Funds are apportioned to

direct recipients; for West Virginia, this is the state Department of Transportation.

West Virginia receives approximately \$2,000,000 a year in Section 5310 funding, roughly split equally between rural and urban areas.

The program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options by purchasing vehicles and paying for contracted services to provide transportation to its specialized clients.

Many of you have seen these vehicles, either on the road or parked at senior centers, non-profit agency headquarters or at sheltered workshops. A distinctive patchwork quilt painted on these vehicles denotes their special status.

Approximately 50-60 organizations participate in the program yearly. For this year, 26 new vehicles will be ordered.

The Division of Public Transit and the transit providers it works with are very aware that their clients are often vulnerable populations and the transportation services provided may be the only transportation options for the people they serve. The Section 5310 program’s vehicles and services fill an important gap in ensuring quality of life for our elderly and disabled citizens.

We’re wearing masks because we know how much we’ve earned and fought for, and how much good we can do.

Keep going West Virginia!



Yellow: Photo Feature by Randy Damron



Yellow, to replace rusted.

So our equipment can spend more time with our operators than with our mechanics.





Photo by Randy Damron.

Did You Know?

**By Angia Hughes,
Benefit Coordinator**

Did you know that PEIA offers a program which can save you money? Through the Comprehensive Care Partnership Program, members can receive specified primary care services while paying less. The Program is available to members of the PEIA PPB Plan A, B, or D health insurance options.

Want to learn more? Check out the 2021 PEIA Shopper's Guide on the PEIA website at

https://peia.wv.gov/Forms-Downloads/Documents/shopper%27s_guides/Shopper%27s_Guide_Plan%20Year_2021.pdf

Locate the form at the following link:

https://peia.wv.gov/Forms-Downloads/Documents/comprehensive_care_partnership_program/CCP%20ENROLLMENT%20FORM%202026%202015-11p.pdf

Contact a Central Human Resources Benefits Team Member: DOTBenefits@wv.gov
(WVDOH Today! welcome you to submit "Did You Know? Articles—DOHnewsletter@wv.gov.)

VISION AWARDS

Congratulations to the following individuals being recognized this June by Secretary Byrd White and Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., for their dedication to The Vision.

Charlie Swart—District 6

Craig Blakeman—District 1

Peggy Armstrong—Engineering

Brian Henry—District 4

William Smith—District 1

Jeff Pifer—Equipment

The Vision is simple; to be the best DOH in the country, for the purpose of giving our West Virginia the chance it should have — a place of prosperity and joy, where citizens have the best chance to build the lives they hope for. To be the best DOH in the country based on the quality of our work and motivation. To be the safest place for our employees to work. To be the best trained, and most educated. To take pride in all we do.

What Does Roads to Prosperity Mean to You?

By Jesse Ward and Eric Steele

“Roads to Prosperity means being able to better help rural West Virginia, and put more money toward roads we couldn’t otherwise reach.”

-Jason Foster, P.E.
Chief Engineer

Special Program Manager



“Roads to Prosperity gives us a chance to move forward with projects that have been sitting on the books for years, and fix deferred maintenance problems.”

-Perry Keller
Section Head, Research



“Roads to Prosperity is a benefit to West Virginia’s global economy.”

-Sean Hill
Director, Aeronautics Commission



“Roads to Prosperity gives us the opportunity to work on smaller projects along with big ones. It’s having the resources we need to get roads fixed.”

-Jacob Bumgarner, P.E.
Director, Operations Division



Hope to Bring One Person Joy

“This is not maintenance forces performing any work,” said Gary Freeman, District 7 Maintenance Engineer. “However, on my way in this morning, I noticed this small American Flag sticking out of a delineator (I-79 near MM 101.7, Southbound) and felt compelled to turn around and take better observation.”

“Even though the flag is small and seemingly insignificant, it is very noticeable. A staunch reminder that we should feel proud and blessed.”

Whomever placed the flag had made Freeman’s day better; from just driving in to work to feeling blessed. Freeman took several photos of the flag, from several angles, until he got one just right — from daisy’s in the foreground to rays of early morning sunlight in the back, shining like hope on the horizon. He forwarded it to ten people. After posting to WVDOT’s Facebook page, it received three positive comments, one hundred and seventy nine likes, thirty loves, and seven cares. Zero angry. Zero laughing. Zero sad.

Freeman said that with the photo, he hoped to make someone’s day better. Just one person. In stopping to take the photo he made the day better for at least two hundred twenty nine people, confirmed with positive responses. Facebook lists a total of seven thousand, twenty eight were reached. The person who placed the flag had that plus one (Gary), and all the others, untraced.

Maintaining the sixth largest highway system in the country isn’t even everything that’s on our plates right now. We have the weight of choosing to be a positive force; to keep moving toward a safe system of roads, to revitalize towns and bring people together — all the things that roads do. We can work constantly and never run out of things rightfully demanding our attention. In the middle of that, we might find chances to bring one person joy. If we choose to do so, it might go farther than we think.



Keith Chapman: On His Return

Keith Chapman has returned from retirement! Chapman retired in 2017, following a 42 (and a half) year career. He began his career in District 2, worked in the county while he attended Marshall University, then accepted the Comptroller's job, which he worked for 25 years, before accepting the Business Manager's position. Just before his retirement, Chapman helped implement Fuel Master, which helped to track fueling of WVDOH vehicles.

"The Division of Highways, from what I've seen since I've been back... and of course you never stop following what you're familiar with, this was my career... we have good management from the very top. From the Governor's office, and from DOT administration, we have good managers in place," said Chapman. "The bond program, a tremendous amount of work going on in the field. The Roads to Prosperity program is



tremendous. That's what everyone wants to see. Everyone wants to see their road taken care of. There's been a real focus on the secondary road system. I can see it every day. I see our maintenance crews out there working every day. One of the big changes that is very noticeable is the equipment that we have. We have made great strides in getting the equipment we need, equipment that is dependable, and that eliminates a lot of down time and gives you the opportunity to get the job done in a really fast manner."

"Keith Chapman is a class act," said Deputy Secretary, Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "A genuine professional, and a genuine

human being. I couldn't be happier that he's come back to share his expertise." In the hallways of Building 5 and across the state, it's clear that Wriston isn't the only one who sees it this way. Welcome back Keith!

Why the Beautiful Purple Flowers?

By Marty Gibson,

Contracts Manager, Operations Division

The City of Charleston was chosen to host the Military Order of the Purple Heart 88th National Convention, which will be held July 27-31, 2020. Governor Jim Justice requested that flowers planted for that time be purple to honor these heroes. The Operations Division Procurement Unit was given the task of making this request a reality. Since we have a native wildflower program, we attempted to find a royal colored wildflower to use, but discovered that native wildflowers to West Virginia in a royal purple were non-existent, other than Ironweed. And only one person that we know of wanted to plant beds with Ironweed! After a lot of research and getting questions answered, the final decision was made to plant sites on the major roadways leading into Charleston and to use a decorative flower, the Supertunia® Royal Velvet® Petunia hybrid. We carefully scoped sites and made the decision to plant flowers at five separate locations: I-64 Eastbound at the "Welcome to Charleston" sign just past the Montrose exit; I-77 Southbound/I-79 Southbound where the two merge; I-64 Eastbound/I-77 Southbound at Exit 99 (State Capitol) and fill in the state outline; US 119 Southbound at the "Welcome to

Charleston" sign coming from the Airport; and, I-77 Northbound at Exit 95 (MacCorkle Ave -Kanawha City). The last site is actually located on the West Virginia Turnpike and Greg Barr, Executive Director was more than happy to allow access for a heart-shaped bed to be placed at the cloverleaf and for his agency to "be a part of this welcome plan for the convention."

Careasa Nichols and myself worked diligently to get the right flower, design the beds, and determine measurements so that plots could be made to calculate the number of flowers we needed. Once the bid process was completed, an order was placed with Gritts Midway Greenhouse in Red House for 2,350 plants. Coordination with District One personnel, Robert Atkins and Doug Brown, lead to having D1 Transportation Workers performing the bed preparation and then the planting of the flowers. As of today, the plants appear a bit small in the beds, but they will settle in, grow and fill the beds with 18" of mounding beautiful flowers for the convention. Although the pandemic has changed all of our lives, the convention is still scheduled as of the printing of this newsletter. But even if it gets cancelled, we will have wonderful purple flowers to enjoy for the summer that will prompt us to remember our heroes in service to our country.



WVDOH Information Corps: Shares Our Work Culture

(From Our Bulletin Board to Yours)

We don't *just* work here. We work here.

The time we spend at work is part of our actual lives.

We could get away with doing less, but in the long run we would be less able.

We become what we give.

We are never done with our work.

We don't have spare time.

It's an ocean, and we have buckets.

Each bucket should be full of good quality work.

When we fix roads, roads fix towns.

When we fix our work culture, we help each other thrive.

When we get past things that hold us back, we become able to grow stronger.

At the end of the day we have something different than at the beginning.

There is only one West Virginia on earth, we work to give it the chance it deserves.

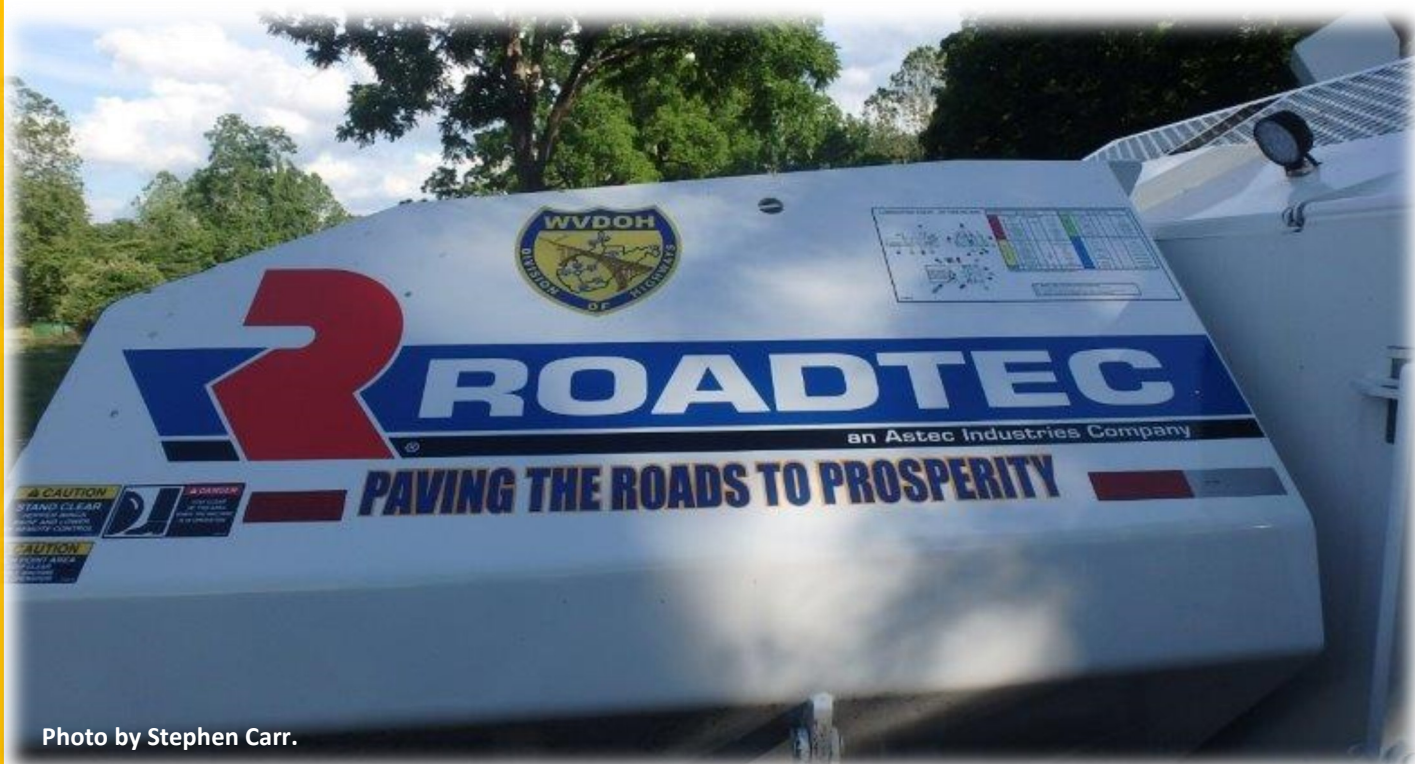


Photo by Stephen Carr.

Route 35 Inspection Tour: 4 Lane to Open Next Year



Right now, there's still a lot of dust, but the "gap section" of Route 35 will be open to traffic next year. Take a look around, with Route 35 Project Manager, Clif Farley, and Deputy Secretary, Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

Letter to the Editor: Graduating Seniors

**By Sandra Lemley,
Secretary II, District 6**

My granddaughter, Paige Williams' class of 2020, Wheeling Park High School, will graduate August 2nd if everything goes well at Wes Banco Arena in Wheeling, WV. Paige went throughout the Wheeling area and had her mother take graduation pictures. Her favorite was with the Suspension Bridge. She even had her parents take her down to have her picture with Moth Man, LOL.

I was thinking it would be a good idea to recognize the graduating Seniors throughout our State in the monthly newsletter. It has been a tough year on all our students, but the graduating class alone has missed out on activities they have worked and dreamed of for 12 years. It's a tough year, with a lot going on, but we should be encouraging them and reminding them that we love and support each of them.



Visit Our Lovely NRGB: Bridge Walk is Open



Photo by Jennifer Dooley.

BridgeWalk is OPEN for catwalk tours on our lovely New River Gorge Bridge in Fayetteville. Guests will be required to follow these *common sense guidelines*:

- 1.) Wear a mask!
- 2.) Wear gloves!
- 3.) Maintain social distancing!
- 4.) Have a wonderful time in one of the most beautiful places you could get to, even if you drove around the whole world!

Paving the Roads to Prosperity



Photos by Randy Damron.



Letter to the Editor: COVID Task Force

Dear Editor,

They say “When the going gets tough, the tough get going”, I have definitely experienced that here recently at DOH with our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. And I’d like to add another element to that, we achieve more and are most successful in facing adversity when we do it together, as a team.

When in early March, as it became clear it was no longer “business and usual” Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston put together a COVID 19 Taskforce. The task force was formed before schools and businesses closed in West Virginia, developing plans for different “what if” contingencies even before we saw the extent of what the virus would mean for our state. This task force is comprised of a group of people from all areas of DOH. The task force was charged with finding a way to keep our people working, with a very clear message that furloughs or layoffs are not an option, while also keeping everyone safe at work. As the situation progressed, there were other states that did lay off their workers. We made sacrifices to keep everyone working.

This task force has been aggressively researching best practices from multiple sources, collecting information from government and health organizations, listening to the concerns and suggestions of managers and employees and then pooling the information. The team then takes this information and constructively argues the merits of various possible actions from a wide range of backgrounds and concerns. From this group of people comes the guidance that we are successfully using to keep us working and safe. Our success has been noticed by private companies and other state agencies, they have looked to us an example and are adopting some of our practices themselves.

The COVID 19 Taskforce is a dedicated group of employees committed to the safety and success of all 5,000 employees and DOH. I couldn’t be more proud to be an employee of DOH and to be serving my fellow employees by serving on the Taskforce.

Lora Witt

COVID-19 Task Force: Jeremy Casto (Chair), Jason Foster (Co-Chair), Kathy Bowe, Jacob Bumgarner, Charlene Chandler, Cindy Cramer, Hussein Elkhansa, Lorrie Hodges, Shane Hudnall, Alanna Keller, Jim Lambert, Ray Patrick

Letter to the Editor: Helpful Turnpike

Dear Editor,

My friend and I were travelling home on Northbound I-77 when the Lazy Daze RV we were bringing back to Michigan ran out of gas. We underestimated the fuel consumption on this steep incline, in a very beautiful stretch of the highway in West Virginia. Unfortunately for us, I was unable to steer the vehicle completely off the road before it shut down. Talk about a time to panic.

We weren’t sure what to do next and were very fearful for our safety and worried about causing a collision on the tollway. Suddenly we saw a DOT road crew truck pull over and back up to our vehicle. One of the guys grabbed a gas can while the other positioned their truck in the right lane behind our vehicle, with flashing lights on. They didn’t have enough gas to get us going so they called for the Safety Patrol (sponsored by State Farm) to bring additional gas. They kept the work truck there until the Safety Patrol brought more fuel so we could eventually continue our journey to Michigan.

Neither the work crew nor Safety Patrol would accept any money for the gas. We feel this represents the very best in Southern hospitality and we’d like to give a heartfelt thanks to all those involved. With all the chaos going on for us, we never got the names of our rescuers.

This happened about 5-6 miles south of the Ghent WV exit so if possible please let your great workers know we’ll always be indebted for their act of kindness, for a couple of stranded travelers. This occurred around 11-12 PM yesterday, June 23.

Mel

Masks:

Wear ‘em with pride.

Keep each other alive.

