

WVDOT Today!



July 2021—Volume 3: Issue 7

WVDOH Backs SWAT! For the sake of transparency.

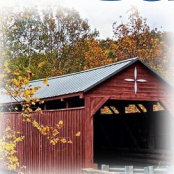


West Virginia Division of Highways knows that when you make an obligation to be transparent with the public, you make an obligation to many things. You make an obligation to accurate information; if it's you who records miles patched on a DOT-12 or keys it into the computer. You make an obligation to information you can share; if it's you who designs a report or webpage in a way that makes sense. You make an obligation to plans and schedules you will keep; if it's you who outlines the CORE maintenance for your county or manages a project to keep it moving. Transparency relies on accountability and consistency, and it's the steep path — not the easy one.

SWAT (Safety With Action Today) addresses citizen concerns with roads in their communities. With SWAT, every citizen gets an answer in seven days on the status of the road they've inquired about. It's a slide that's next in line to be repaired by our own drill crews. It's a road we patched to prepare it for paving in August. You can't tell by looking at a road what's to come, so citizens call 1-833-WVROADS or email WVROADS@wv.gov and we tell them, within seven days, what to expect. For those who answer the SWAT phone line (like Sharonnia Osayaba, pictured), it can be a stressful line of work. Our Division as a whole is

constantly pressing in the direction of more efficiency, stretching the dollars, catching up— we come to work, work to the best of our ability every moment, go home and think about work at the end of every day; we are truly doing our best to bring the roads into the best condition they can be as quickly as we can. We devote our careers to roads because we care about West Virginia. The folks who answer SWAT are the ones who hear every day about we haven't gotten done yet. They carry the constant "are we there yet?" "No." "Are we there yet?" "No." "Are we there yet?" They are the unsung heroes, a cornerstone to transparency as an agency, and this issue of WVDOT Today! is dedicated to them. See page 6 for more photos of on our wonderful SWAT team!

Also in this issue...



Glenville Gets 5th Roundabout in the State

The town of Glenville and Glenville State College have an easily accessible new entrance with the dedication of a new roundabout project.

The roundabout, at the intersection of US 33 with College Street and Mineral Road, was officially dedicated at a ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday, July 1, 2021.

“This is another example of Governor Justice’s Roads to Prosperity program,” said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Byrd White. “The fifth roundabout in the state, it’s been much anticipated by the community of Glenville and the college as well.”

Patrick Miller, WVDOH project supervisor for the project, said the roundabout eases congestion at the intersection, where College Street and

Mineral Road both approached US 33 at sharp angles. The roundabout design was chosen as the best solution to improve traffic flow in the area, and provide smoother access to both the town of Glenville, Glenville State College and Glenville State’s stadium.

Campus officials intend to erect a sign near the roundabout identifying it as a major entrance for the college.

The ribbon cutting ceremony, moved indoors due to rain, saw a crowd of smiling faces with a video recorded message specifically from Governor Justice. Secretary Byrd White, District 7 Engineer Brian Cooper, and others in attendance shared in the enthusiasm for the 5th roundabout in the state, a graceful solution to a longstanding traffic hang-up.



• **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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Repair Work to Start on Historic Covered Bridge

Restoration work is almost ready to begin on the historic Carrollton Covered Bridge in Barbour County.

The bridge, the third-oldest surviving covered bridge in West Virginia, was 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 fire was later determined to be arson.

The West Virginia Division of Highways was able to reopen the bridge to traffic in September 2017 after making minor repairs to the deck and structure to ensure the bridge was safe. DOH then hired a consultant to best determine how to restore the historic bridge.

Initial plans were for a consultant to do the restoration work, but in November 2020 it was decided to leave the work to



DOH work crews, who could restore the bridge more economically.

DOH has since been securing bids for materials necessary to restore the span.

“We’re committed to getting this bridge rebuilt,” said DOH District 7 Engineer Brian Cooper. “We appreciate the public being patient as we’ve worked out the plans to get it done.”

In late May, Tiger Diversified LLC, in Upshur County, was awarded a contract to provide the timber for the restoration project. On Thursday, June 24, 2021, DOH received a bid of \$400,000 to provide the scaffolding and rigging system necessary to do the work.

If the bid is accepted, restoration work on the bridge could begin quickly, Cooper said.

DOH Recognizes Our Own Good Samaritans

I just wanted to drop a little tidbit your way to do with whatever you may want but that I think is VERY cool. Last week while doing smoothness testing, our employee, Colton Farley, was one of the first people on the scene of an accident involving a large cargo truck that had flipped and skidded some distance. He helped free the driver, made sure someone had called 911 AND THEN used the fire extinguisher located in the smoothness van to extinguish the fire that had started in the

wrecked truck. Another employee, Ben Whelan, was also present for all this, but he gives Colton most of the credit.

Colton does NOT want any recognition for this, but I think it really is a special and outstanding thing for a person to do.

Thank you, Stephanie Elliott, Highway Division Assistant Director, Materials Control, Soils & Testing Division

On the Road for the State She Loves: Go Babydog!



Photo complement's of Governor's Communication's Team.

Shout out to Babydog Justice! She's on the road all over the state making sure West Virginians know about the COVID-19 vaccine.

WVDOT appreciates you Babydog! We hope to see you out and about somewhere.



Meet Sean Hill, Director of the Aeronautics Commission



Sean Hill is Executive Director of the West Virginia Aeronautics Commission. Though a small office, Hill and the Commission are responsible for assisting, advising and helping secure grants and funding for West Virginia's 24 airports, both commercial and non-commercial.

Hill presides over the five-member West Virginia Aeronautics Commission, which makes vital decisions about how to best spend the Mountain State's limited resources in support of aviation.

"My job entails working with the airports across the state and our federal and state partners to push aviation forward," Hill said. As such, he works closely with the Federal Aviation Administration and state lawmakers.

Hill's responsibilities include overseeing the Aeronautics Commission's \$1.2 million annual budget and disbursing \$12,500 a year to each airport in the state.

A Parkersburg native, Hill, 36, graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in criminology and investigations. He has been in West Virginia state government since 2009, having previously worked in the office of the Secretary of State and the Governor's office.

"I've had some of the coolest jobs in state government," Hill said.

An admitted tech geek who is about to embark on a journey into computerized flight simulators, Hill is also a certified drone pilot who would like to see the drone industry expand in the Mountain State.

Hill lives in Charleston with his wife, Bridget, and two sons, Cole, 7, and Finn, 5. When not playing video games with his children, he enjoys flying his drone, hiking and sports.

He is also a world-traveler, having been to China, Japan, Germany and Hungary.

Everyone is a Pedestrian

At some point in the day, everyone is a pedestrian. Whether you walk your child to school or walk from your vehicle's parking lot to the office, each of us walks where vehicles travel. Unfortunately, pedestrian fatalities remain high. In 2019, 6,205 pedestrians died nationwide. In West Virginia, 31 pedestrians were killed by drivers in 2019. We rarely are more vulnerable than when walking in urban areas, crossing busy streets and negotiating traffic. You all know even rural areas can be dangerous to walk in, as many areas have no sidewalks, crosswalks or safe spaces for walking. Since we all are pedestrians from time to time, it's important to pay attention to what is going on around us. That's why the GHSP is sharing information on pedestrian safety this month.

Follow these tips to stay safe as a pedestrian: Whenever possible, walk on the sidewalk; if no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic. Follow the rules of the road, obeying all traffic signs and signals. Cross streets at crosswalks. 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. Stay alert – avoid cell phone use and wearing earbuds. Avoid alcohol and drug impairment when walking. Wear bright and/or reflective clothing, and use a flashlight at night. Watch for cars entering or exiting driveways or backing up in parking lots. Children younger than 10 should cross the street with an adult. Head Up, Phone Down. Pay attention.

Distracted walking incidents are on the rise, and everyone with

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

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

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

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



Airports Contribute \$1.63 Billion to State Economy

West Virginia's commercial and general aviation airports contribute about \$1.63 billion in revenue and create more than 10,000 jobs, according to a study commissioned by the West Virginia Aeronautics Commission.

According to the just-released West Virginia Aviation Economic Impact Study, visitors to the state's seven commercial and 17 general aviation airports also spend more than \$69 million a year.

"The purpose of the study is to take the first look in over 30 years at the economic impact of our airports," said Aeronautics Commission Director Sean Hill. "The idea is to get a baseline to understand what the airports mean to our economy."

The \$400,000 study was paid for with funding from the Federal Aviation Administration, with a 10 percent match from the Aeronautics Commission. Results were based on 2019 data.

The study, conducted by planning and design engineering consultants Kimley-Horn, looks at both quantitative data – how much money goes into and out of the state's airports – and qualitative data – how important airports are to local business, military and medical needs.

But Hill said the Aeronautics Commission wasn't interested in a study that painted the Mountain State's airport system in the rosiest light possible.

"We didn't want any fluff," he said. "I didn't want to see numbers that seemed crazy to me. I'm pretty confident in what we came up with."

"We wanted to make sure we took the most conservative approach possible," Hill said.

The study found that West Virginia's airport industry employs 10,729 people.

The figure does not include just employees who work directly for the airport, but jobs directly associated with the airport or those from businesses who lease space at the airport. At Yeager Airport in Charleston, for example, 2,940 employees include airport workers, rental car employees, workers at Executive Air and the West Virginia National Guard, which shares runway space with the airport.

The 2,345 jobs recorded at North Central West Virginia Airport in Clarksburg also include employees at aircraft component company Aurora Flight Sciences and aircraft maintenance company Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation.

Hill says the information from the report is important because the Aeronautics Commission has limited funding.

The main source of revenue for the commission is taxes on aviation fuel, which brings in about \$1.2 million a year. The commission automatically gives each airport in the state \$12,500 a year, but also matches funding put up by the FAA for local airport projects.

Hill also said data from the study will be shared with state lawmakers to make better decisions about West Virginia's airports.



Scholarly Pursuits

District 2 Maintenance Engineer Dave Brabham (left) was recently awarded his certificate and portfolio for passing the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program (WVLTAP) Roads Scholar II program. The Roads Scholar II program is designed primarily for local, state, and private transportation employees, who are in higher-level supervisory, management, and/or technical positions.



New Shows: Thursday 4:00 p.m.
Transportation.wv.gov
Click on the Podcast link.
Or listen on the Soundcloud app.



Meet Your District SWAT Representatives



Katonya Hart, D1



Beverly Elder, D2



Deanna Shackelford, D7



Tonya Clements, D4



Myria Rucker, D10



Karen Saunders, D2



J.R. Smith, D10



Angie Huffman (L), Alice Ervine, D9



Kari Maury, D6

COVID Confidentiality

There have been reports of employee supervisors commenting on employee vaccine status. Although in the grand scheme of things these reports are limited, in light of the lifting of the statewide mask mandate, it would be a good time to reiterate to your supervisors that in no way should they be commenting on an employee's vaccine status or encouraging/discouraging employees related to their vaccine status choices. The same would go for an employee who chooses to wear a mask or not wear a mask. That action is an individual choice and should remain free of comment from supervisors.

Please pass this information along throughout your organizations. Employees should work with their HR Representative if this is happening.

Jeremy Casto—COVID Task Force Chair, Assistant Director—
Strategic Data Management & Technology Division

Tech Tip Tuesday

Due to the various network issues, we are temporarily implementing a work around process for "Technical Tip Tuesday". Our intention is to help simplify the access process and to cut down on email notifications from the T&D unit. We will be using MS TEAMS until further notice. Attached you will find the needed instructions to access "Technical Tip Tuesday". In order to access the tips/information and get weekly notifications of the weekly tips, you must follow and the instructions to subscribe to the TEAMS channel entitled "Technical Tip Tuesday". If you have any question or assistance with the instructions, please contact us at dohtrainingdevelopment@wv.gov. We appreciate your patience and understanding – as the various network issues are hopefully resolved.

WVDOH Human Resources Division



Staying Safe on Two Wheels: Bicycle Safety

Thousands of people each year are killed on America's roadways, and many of those deaths could have been prevented. In fact, in 2019, 2.3 percent (846) of all roadway deaths were bicycle-related fatalities. Tragically, in a crash between a vehicle and a bicycle, the bicyclist is far more likely to be killed or injured.

The GHSP offers simple steps everyone can take to reduce the number of these tragedies each year. Keeping West Virginia's roads safe is a shared responsibility.

With driving comes enormous responsibility and keeping West Virginia's roads safe should be a top priority for everyone. Getting to a doctor's appointment, work, or school won't be important if you strike a bicyclist while driving there. Always look for bicyclists whenever and wherever you are driving, and give them at least 3 feet clearance when passing them on the road. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2017, bicyclist deaths occurred most often in urban areas (75%) compared to rural areas (25%).

Following the posted speed limit and focusing on the road, instead of an electronic device, affords drivers time to see, identify, and react in time to brake for bicyclists. Regardless of the season, bicyclist deaths occurred most often between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. and in many places that means it's dark, or getting dark, outside. When a driver sees something up ahead, the driver is able to slow down and identify what it is. Because the driver is able to see and identify, he or she is able to react by applying the brakes.

While it is the responsibility of drivers to stay alert and aware of their surroundings, there are also actions bicyclists can take

to stay safe, like wearing a bicycle helmet every time they ride. A helmet is the single most effective way to prevent a head injury in a bicycle crash. Bicyclists should also remember to "dress for the occasion." If you are out riding during the day, wear bright colors; at night, be sure to wear something with reflective materials, and have front lights and red reflectors or flashing rear lights on your bicycle. In short, make yourself visible.

Both drivers and bicyclists should always keep customary safety habits in mind, too, like not using electronic devices while driving or riding, and avoiding alcohol and drug use because they can impair judgement. Everyone who uses West Virginia's roads has a duty to drive safely, which, in turn, helps everyone get to their destinations unharmed.

To reduce traffic safety risks to bicyclists, safety should always be the top priority for those traveling on or near the road. Visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety to learn more tips, and to get more information about bicycle safety.

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An Unexpected "Thank You"



Sometimes the little things don't go unnoticed. Employees for WVDOH District 1 were recently surprised to find this sign put up by grateful citizens in the Kanawha County town of Malden.

Acting District 1 Manager Arlie Matney said paving in Malden had been on the DOH schedule for some time, and warmer weather provided the perfect opportunity.

DOH road crews paved Malden Avenue and the on ramp to US 60 in Malden.

"This goes a long way toward making our people feel like the work they do is being seen," said Matney.



Charleston Police To The Rescue

The West Virginia Department of Transportation central office would like to give a shout-out to Charleston Police Detective T.J. Crowder, who helped locate a bicycle for a Building 5 maintenance worker.

Darrell Beasley, a contract maintenance worker in Building 5, had his bicycle stolen recently. West Virginia State Capitol Police were going to take up a collection to buy a new bike, but Executive Assistant Lorrie Hodges contacted Crowder, whom she knew, to see if he could help.

Crowder was able to locate an unclaimed bicycle that had been in storage. The bicycle was fixed up and presented to Beasley.

Cabin Creek Slide Repaired

District 1 repair crews made quick work of clearing a rock slide that recently closed a section of Cabin Creek Road near Chelyan. The slide came down during the night, but cleanup crews had the road completely reopened by about noon the following day. Good job, District 1 team!



VISION AWARDS

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

Jesse Bennett—Technical Support

Dava Hearn—District 2

Teddy Hinkle—District 8

Heather Huffman—Operations

Justin Johnson—District 8

William Kimble—District 5

Mike Mance—Materials

Joseph Mullins—District 8

Josh Ramsey—District 1

Marty Scites—Executive office

Patrick Shea—Equipment

John Toomey—Strategic Data Management

Stefan White—District 1

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 go Above and Beyond, every day.



A Question of Timing: Co-op Solves Traffic Problem

If Addison Watkins is looking for a career with the West Virginia Division of Highways, chances are good she'll have one. The District 3 co-op student from Fairmont State University recently helped solve a frustrating problem at a traffic light in South Parkersburg.

"We're heavily trying to recruit her," said District 3 Traffic Engineer Dave Smith.

Watkins recently went out with Smith and another District 3 worker to try to figure out what was wrong with a traffic light that was causing major backups at the intersection of WV 14 and the Patriot Center shopping center. After watching the light go through about five cycles, Watkins figured out what the problem was.



Turns out a glitch in the traffic light control system was adding an extra phase and holding up traffic for a left turn. Problem was there was no left turn lane and no left turn arrow.

"It was basically holding everyone up for traffic that wasn't really there," Watkins said.

"We would have eventually gotten it, but she figured it out first," Smith said.

Watkins likes traffic engineering.

"It's kind of like a puzzle," she said. "There are a lot of different pieces to it."

Now going into her senior year, Watkins is keeping her career options open. But WVDOH is among them.

West Virginia Turnpike Breaks 11-Year Record

Traffic on the West Virginia Turnpike over the Fourth of July holiday season was the heaviest it's been since 2010.

"It was a huge Fourth of July period," said Jeff Miller, Executive Director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority. "People are just ready to get out and travel."

Between Thursday, July 1, 2021 and Monday, July 5, the Turnpike saw 668,004 vehicles pass through Turnpike toll booths. Since the Fourth of July falls on different days of the week, Parkways typically looks at the five days surrounding the holiday in determining traffic counts.

"The fourth fell on a weekend, and a lot of people had Monday off," Miller said, Despite the Fourth falling on a Saturday last year, overall travel numbers for the five-day holiday travel period were more than 28 percent higher than for July 4, 2020.

"Last year's travel was severely affected by the pandemic," Miller said.



Miller said many travelers went on vacation the weekend before the Fourth of July, and came home the weekend after. Between Sunday, June 27 and Monday, July 5, more than 1.12 million vehicles used the Turnpike.

With such high traffic volumes, travelers only experienced scattered, minor delays, Miller said. Parkways officials posted

flaggers in toll areas to help direct traffic, put on extra shifts, and coordinated with West Virginia State Police and the state Courtesy Patrol to provide the safest, fastest experience possible.

"Everyone was ready for it," Miller said. "We didn't really have any significant backups."



Look Before You Lock

Outside of crashes, heatstroke is the number one vehicle-related killer of children in the United States. Since 1998, 886 children have died due to Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke (PVH). All of these deaths could have been prevented.

As temperatures heat up, the GHSP is raising awareness to help reduce the number of heatstroke deaths by reminding everyone about the dangers of vehicular heatstroke and leaving children in hot cars.

Even on mild or cloudy days, temperatures inside vehicles can reach life-threatening levels. Leaving windows slightly open doesn't help. Children should never be left unattended or be able to get inside a vehicle. In just 10 minutes, a car can heat up by 20 degrees and become deadly. A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than adult's, and heatstroke can occur in outside temperatures as low as 57 degrees. When a child is left in a hot vehicle, that child's temperature can rise quickly – and they could die within minutes.

As outside temperatures rise, the risk of children dying from vehicular heatstroke increases. On average, one child dies from heatstroke every 9 days in the United States from being left in a car or climbing into an unlocked vehicle. What is most tragic is that every single one of these deaths could have been prevented.

Three primary reasons resulting in children dying in hot cars include:

- A caregiver forgetting a child in a vehicle
- The child gaining access to a vehicle without adults knowing
- Someone knowingly leaving a child in a vehicle

As more people return to the workplace following office closures due to COVID-19, many families may have changes in their schedules. When normal habits or routes change, we see parents and caregivers forgetting children in a vehicle.

Another contributing factor to forgetting children in a car is lack of sleep. When parents and caregivers are exhausted, either due to a child being up all night or because someone in the home is sick and sleep schedules are interrupted, adults are at an increased risk of forgetting a child in a vehicle.

The GHSP urges parents and caregivers to follow these guidelines:

- NEVER leave a child in a vehicle unattended, even if the windows are partially open or the engine is running, and the air conditioning is on.
- Make it a habit to check your entire vehicle – front and back – before locking the door and walking away.

Train yourself to Park, Look, Lock, or always ask yourself, "Where's Baby?"

Ask your childcare provider to call if your child doesn't show up for care as expected.

Place a personal item like a cell phone, purse or a briefcase in the back seat, as another reminder to look before you lock. Write a note or place a stuffed animal in the passenger's seat to remind you that a child is in the back seat.

Store car keys out of a child's reach and teach children that a vehicle is not a play area.

Always lock your car doors and trunk, year-round, so children can't get into unattended vehicles

If you are a bystander and see a child in a hot vehicle:

Make sure the child is okay and responsive. If not, call 911 immediately.

If the child appears to be okay, attempt to locate the parents or have the facility's security or management page the car owner over the PA system.

If there is someone with you, one person should actively search for the parent while the other waits at the car.

If the child is not responsive or appears to be in distress, attempt to get into the car to assist the child – even if that means breaking a window. Many states have "Good Samaritan" laws that protect people from lawsuits for getting involved to help a person in an emergency.

Know the warning signs of heatstroke, which include red, hot, and moist or dry skin; no sweating; a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse; nausea; confusion; or acting strangely.

If a child exhibits any of these signs after being in a hot vehicle, quickly spray the child with cool water or with a garden hose. NEVER put a child in an ice bath. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

For more information on the dangers of heatstroke in children, visit: nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke.

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DO IT FOR BABYDOG

SAVE A LIFE. CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

SWEEPSTAKES

WHO CAN ENTER?

- West Virginians 12 to 17 years of age who have received at least their first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine
- West Virginians 18 years of age and older who have received at least their first COVID-19 vaccine if receiving the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose if receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

WHAT CAN YOU WIN?

- \$1.588 million grand prize
- \$588,000 second prize
- Weekly drawing for \$1 million
- Full scholarship to any WV state college or university
- Custom-outfitted truck
- Weekend vacation at a state park
- Lifetime hunting and fishing license
- Custom hunting rifle or custom hunting shotgun

Find a COVID-19 vaccine near you at vaccines.gov.

Learn more and register to win prizes at doitforbabydog.wv.gov!

