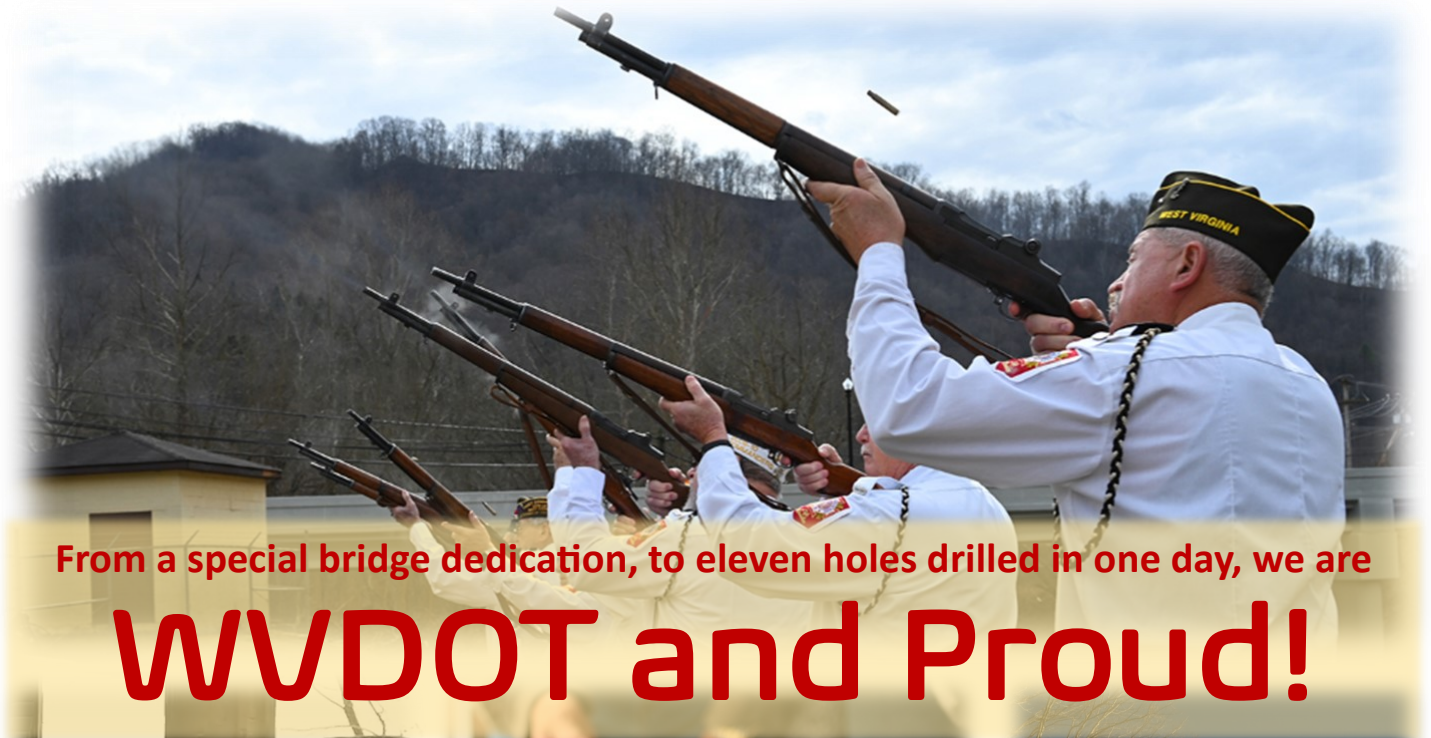


WV DOT Today!



March 2023—Volume 5: Issue 3



From a special bridge dedication, to eleven holes drilled in one day, we are

WV DOT and Proud!



WVDOH Rededicates Darwin Kyle Bridge



West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., recently rededicated the Darwin K. Kyle Memorial Bridge in Madison to former Racine resident and Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Darwin K. Kyle.

The bridge, which carries WV 17 over the Little Coal River in the Boone County town of Madison, was replaced with funding from Gov. Jim Justice’s \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program. Justice awarded a \$4.7 million contract to Triton Construction in August 2021 for complete replacement of the span.

“We are first in the nation, per capita, for military service,” said Wriston. “He gave his life to protect what we have today.”

The original Darwin K. Kyle Memorial Bridge was built in 1985. Due to weight restrictions it was decided to replace the span. Roads to Prosperity allowed the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) to replace scores of bridges around the state that might otherwise take years to address.

“I am proud of anything that takes place in Boone County,” said former Boone County House of Delegates member Delores Cook. “Today, we are rededicating this bridge to a wonderful, wonderful man. May he rest in peace.”

Kyle was born in Kentucky but grew up in Boone County. He was awarded the Silver Star and Bronze Star during World War II, but was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts to save his men near Kamil-ni, Korea,



in February 1951.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, Kyle and his men were pinned down by heavy enemy fire when he personally led a charge against the enemy, knocking out one machine gun emplacement single-handed before being killed leading an attack against a second position.

Kyle’s widow was officially presented with his Medal of Honor at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 16, 1952. He is buried in South Charleston.

The rededication of the Darwin K. Kyle Memorial Bridge was marked by a 21-gun salute and a ceremonial rendition of “Taps.”

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

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Airport Road: 11 Holes in One Day

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) drilling crews are using their own workers and equipment to expedite construction of a pile retaining wall to fix a slip along Airport Road in Charleston.

On Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023, WVDOH crews drilled 11 holes and sank 11 steel pilings along the side of the road, which provides access to West Virginia International Yeager Airport, and were set to match that number on Wednesday, Feb. 22.

West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., said that's more than many contractors might get done in two weeks.

Over the past few years, the WVDOH has invested in four drills and trained their work crews in how to use them. The WVDOH often uses contractors to drill or install piling walls, but contractors aren't always available when the WVDOH needs them.

WVDOH drilling crews don't take the place of contractors, but

give the WVDOH additional options for getting needed work done quickly.

WVDOH work crews have gotten very good at drilling and installing piling walls.

"They're the best bargain in state government," Wriston said. "These guys know what they're doing. In a couple of weeks we'll be finished up there."

Slip repair along Airport Road has been in the works for some time. The WVDOH had even helped the airport get an Industrial Access Road Grant to pay for the work.

"They went through part of the process and realized they really didn't have the matching money to complete the project," Wriston said.

Working with Gov. Jim Justice and airport officials, it was agreed that the airport would give the grant money back and the WVDOH would make the slip repairs on Airport Road.



WVDOH Builds and Installs Bat Boxes to Help Winged Friends

By Sydney Burke,

**Endangered Species Specialist,
Technical Support Division**

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) is responsible for building and maintaining roadways that transverse mountains, valleys, wild rivers, and rolling countryside. These roads help get our citizens to schools, work, hospitals, families, and neighbors safely. While doing this, sometimes we impact the habitats of our native animals. Occasionally trees have to be cut, which bats could use for their roosting sites. To mitigate for this, we cut trees in the winter when the bats are not using them, and we put up bat boxes.

Artificial roosts are erected where there is a loss of natural habitat, in the hope that these boxes will be used by bats when they come back to the forest in the springtime. Bat boxes are meant to mimic bats' preferred habitats, which are typically under peeling bark in large, dead, or dying trees. These holes, crevices, and spaces under the peeling bark provide shelter from predators and harsh weather conditions.

These large trees also allow bats to reside high off the ground protected from predators such as snakes and raccoons, while also receiving ample sunlight. Bat boxes can play a vital role in their survival, providing optimal roosting conditions, which might otherwise be hard to find.

The WVDOH has put up bat boxes all across West Virginia with help from local transportation districts.

In District 5, there is an old church that had been used as a sign shop in Burlington. The church building was old and falling in, so the district got environmental clearance to tear it down and build a new building in its place. But the building was full of bats. I checked it out and determined that no threatened or endangered bats were using it, but I hated to see so many bats lose their home! I asked the district if they would be willing to build and put up some bat boxes or a condo. I sent plans for both and they said they would be happy to work on it, as some of the guys who work at the sign shop are carpenters.



They built the condo in 2020 and put it up, just in time for the bats to return. These guys read the materials I gave them and did some of their own research. The bat condo is in a fantastic location and is absolutely amazing! It took them two weeks to build, is 8 feet wide by 8 ft deep, and can house up to 6,000 bats. It is about 10 feet above the ground to deter predators and has a total of 86 sheets of plywood.

Every inch of the plywood has been hand scratched in order to duplicate the texture of tree bark and help the bats climb around. The box includes trap doors that will allow for easy cleanout. It was painted a dark color and is set to face 160 degrees to the southeast, to provide bats with as much warmth from the sun as possible. I worked with our WVDOH graphic designer to make an informational sign that we will also put at this location. I will be checking on the success I'm sure we will have here throughout the upcoming years.

I also had some folks from District 1 build some bat boxes as mitigation for another project. They installed them for me at Little Creek Park in South Charleston, and they are phenomenal as well. The guys used signposts for the stands and built the boxes themselves. They did such a great job and offered to help anytime we need any more!

We also had a need for bat boxes as mitigation for the Trout Run Railroad Bridge that recently opened. Our folks in District 8, the sign shop folks, as well as Todd Schoonover and Greg Pennington, helped with these boxes. They built beautiful boxes using old pipes from the locomotives for posts. These are now installed at Cass Scenic Railroad riverside park and Whittaker Station along with the informational signs by WVDOH.

As part of the Corridor H mitigation for Kerens to Parsons, the WVDOH partnered with the Monongahela National Forest to install more than 60 bat boxes within the National Forest. We also partnered with the City of Parsons and have bat boxes and informational signs within Parsons City Parks.



Celebrating a Milestone



As WVDOT joined together to celebrate the retirement of our State Highway Engineer, Alan Reed, P.E., friends chipped in and bought a cake, lots of folks shared smiles and memories, but it was Rocky Reed, Alan's pup, who stole the show in his smart little vest. Best dressed, paws down!



2023 Vehicle Safety Recalls Week is March 6-12

To help keep Americans safe inside and outside the vehicle, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is reminding drivers to check their vehicles for open safety recalls. NHTSA provides a free user-friendly Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Look-Up Tool, a web-based portal available through [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov) that allows vehicle owners to check for open safety recalls for their vehicles or automotive equipment, such as tires and car seats.

Remember: Safe Cars Save Lives, which is why NHTSA developed the SaferCar app to make things simple and easy for you, the consumer. Every vehicle recall is a safety-related issue, which means it's essential to get the repair done immediately.

Spring Daylight Saving Time is a perfect time of year to remember to check your vehicle for safety recalls. NHTSA is hosting a Vehicle Safety Recalls Week March 6–12, 2023, to coincide with the beginning of Daylight Saving Time on March 12. NHTSA urges drivers to check for recalls twice yearly. Drivers are encouraged to add “check for safety recalls” to that vital springtime to-do list, which may also include checking smoke detector batteries. The process of checking for your vehicle's safety recalls is quick and easy:

- Visit [NHTSA.gov/recalls](https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls) and enter your vehicle's 17-digit VIN. In seconds, you'll know if your vehicle is subject to an open safety recall. While you're there, sign up for Recall Alerts. If your vehicle is included in a future recall, you'll receive an email letting you know. NHTSA's free web recalls tool will provide details on any unrepaired recall in your vehicle — for at least the past 15 calendar years. It will also provide details on unrepaired safety recalls from major automakers, motorcycle manufacturers, and some medium/heavy truck manufacturers.
- NHTSA's SaferCar app can also help keep you informed

about your vehicle. Download the app and enter your vehicle's VIN, as well as your car seats, tires, or any other automotive equipment information, and NHTSA will send you an alert if a safety recall is issued on them. The app is available for iOS and Android.

- Look for the VIN on the lower portion of your car's windshield on the driver's side. Your VIN is also located on your car's registration card, and it may be shown on your insurance card.
- If your vehicle is affected by a safety recall, contact your nearest dealer to schedule a recall repair as soon as possible. Remember: Every recall is fixed FOR FREE. In fact, an urgent air bag recall is still ongoing, currently the largest vehicle recall in U.S. history. Find out if your vehicle is involved in this recall.
- In 2021, there were 1,093 safety recalls affecting more than 34 million vehicles and other equipment in the United States. Unfortunately, millions of vehicles go unrepaired every year, which puts drivers, passengers, and others on the road at risk.
- If you have a used vehicle, you may not be receiving your vehicle's recall notices. This is why it is important to take the initiative, check for yourself, and sign up for safety recall alerts to make sure you're informed about a recall that affects your safety.
- Speak up! If you think your vehicle may have a safety-related defect that isn't part of a current recall, submit your vehicle safety complaints at NHTSA online or by calling the agency's Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236. Even one complaint could be enough to trigger a safety recall.



Look Out, Canopy. It's Treezilla!

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has a new weapon to clear away trees and branches high above the Mountain State's roadways.

It's called Treezilla, and it's not messing around.

District 1 recently contracted to use the massive tree cutting machine on the hillsides high above Interstate 64 in Charleston, where access to canopy is limited by high retaining walls.

"It will reach back into the woods well over 100 feet from the interstate, cut a tree, pick it up, put it in the chipper, and you're done," said District 1 Manager Arlie Matney. "We actually had trees up there that would block both north and southbound lanes if they fell."

From November through March, the WVDOH cuts trees and



branches along the state's highways. This not only allows sunlight to reach the road surface to keep roads dry, but eliminates overhead canopy that could fall into the road or onto a vehicle.

Along I-64 in Charleston, Matney said overhanging trees had not been cut since the interstate came through. Treezilla allowed the WVDOH to cut and grind up the trees without risking injury to work crews or accidentally dropping branches into traffic lanes.

Treezilla uses a long boom with a massive claw on the end. With the claw, Treezilla can grab a tree or a branch high above the ground. A big saw mounted on the end of the boom then swings out

to cut the tree or branch before Treezilla gently lowers it to the ground to be pulverized in a massive chipper.

Turnpike Director Addresses IBTTA

West Virginia Parkways Authority Executive Director Jeff Miller recently attended the 2023 International Bridge Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) Leadership Academy in Washington, D.C. He was part of an Executive Roundtable full of emerging leaders within the tolling industry across the United States.

During the Executive Roundtable, Miller presented for 15 minutes on the West Virginia Turnpike and Parkways Authority. He was joined at the table by Joi Taylor Dean of Richmond Metropolitan Transportation, Ana Bonet Olivart of Elizabeth River Crossings, and Ferzan Ahmed of the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission.

"I was honored to be invited to participate in that with three other individuals that are executive directors of their tolling agencies," said Miller.

Following the 15-minute presentations there were four breakout



groups with 10 Leadership Academy students. Each group had specific questions on leadership, industry trends, and where they see tolling in the future.

Miller said the executive leaders also taught about reciprocity across the tolling agencies and how agencies can work together in certain areas.

Miller is a newly elected board member of the IBTTA.

The academy was held at Washington's Weston Hotel and featured presenters from Florida, New England and the country Greece.

"Most turnpike agencies use their bond revenue for the benefit of their own turnpike for capitol improvement projects where we are able to fund those and be self-sufficient from a financial standpoint," Miller said.

"It's always a fun story to tell to national industry leaders who can understand it and listen to it."



Parkways Authority Approves Toll Plaza Renovation Contract

The West Virginia Parkways Authority has approved a contract for demolition and renovation of the Beckley and Bluestone travel plazas.

Gov. Jim Justice announced the project in November 2022.

Paramount Builders LLC, of St. Albans, was awarded the contract for \$122,820,381.53.



“To be able to partner with a West Virginia construction firm that has delivered so many quality projects around the state truly adds to the overall partnerships we have formed in working towards making this project a reality,” said Miller. “We look forward to opening these facilities to the public by the fourth

quarter of 2024.”

“On behalf of the West Virginia Parkways Authority, I am excited that our Board has approved to award the demolition and construction contract to Paramount Builders,” said Jeff Miller, executive director of the Parkways Authority.

“This officially sets into motion the plan to bring world-class facilities to Southern West Virginia to showcase our beautiful state to the millions of travelers we see annually on the West Virginia Turnpike, most of whom are from out of state.”

Both travel plazas closed on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023, to begin the major renovation project.

The Parkways Authority signed the contract on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2023. Paramount Builders is expected to be ready to demolish the facilities this month.

The newly redeveloped travel plazas will offer expanded food concepts, a 24/7 Mountain State Market convenience store, outdoor dining options, expanded parking for tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles, EV charging stations, separated vehicle and tractor-trailer fueling options, picnic area, and pet relief areas. The Beckley Travel Plaza will offer a drive through, increased restroom facilities, and bus parking, as well as enhancing and highlighting the Parkways Authority Tourist Information Centers.

Beginning Saturday, April 1, 2023, the hours of the Tamarack Marketplace, located next door to the Beckley travel plaza, will expand. The facility will be open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. to accommodate travelers. Tamarack is currently open six days a week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Kudos to WVDOT Districts

When the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) does good, we like to hear about it. Here are some emails:

To District 6:

You and I talked a couple of weeks ago about an area on Route 2 near Proctor, West Virginia where there was a dip in the road.

I’ve called to say thank you. I wanted to say thank you for having that taken care of. It didn’t take but a couple of days and there was a patch in there.

It’s not perfect but it’s much better than it was.

Again, just wanted to say thank you for having that taken care of.

Who knows, we may have saved some lives by taking care of it and keeping people on that side of the road.

--Chris

To District 4:

I am calling about Camp Run Road in Mannington. The Division of Highways showed up yesterday and they are still working today. I just wanted to call and say thank you.

--Helen



Keller Appointed Deputy DOT Secretary, Deputy DOH Commissioner

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) recently announced that Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., has appointed Alanna Keller, P.E., as Deputy State Highway Secretary and Deputy State Commissioner of Highways.

“I’m very proud to be able to appoint Alanna to this important position helping me oversee an agency of over 5,700 employees who

are all working to improve and maintain West Virginia’s infrastructure,” said Wriston. “Alanna’s a leader, and that’s exactly what she’s going to do in this new position.”

Keller most recently served as WVDOT Chief Engineer of Special Programs, where she worked closely with other agencies within the WVDOT to further the department’s vision of “One DOT.” She was the first woman to be named as a Chief Engineer within



with a master’s degree in Civil Engineering. Keller started work with the West Virginia Division of Highways in 2009 in the Planning and Programming Administration Division.

Alanna is married to Perry Keller, who is also an integral part of the WVDOH team as Chief Economic Development Officer, and has two children, Ellie, her 17-year-old daughter and Sam, her 18-year-old stepson.

the WVDOT. Keller was instrumental in working with the State Rail Authority to replace the Trout Run Bridge on the railway line between Cass and Durbin and the Division of Public Transit to build a new bus transfer station in Bluefield.

Keller graduated from West Virginia Institute of Technology in 1996 with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and West Virginia University in 1998

Final Work Begins on MacCorkle

Work is underway on the final phase of three construction contracts awarded by the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) to rehabilitate MacCorkle Avenue in Kanawha City all the way from 33rd Street to 58th Street.

In December 2022, Gov. Jim Justice awarded a contract for \$9,300,698 to Mountaineer Contractors Inc. to completely repave MacCorkle Avenue from 40th Street to 58th Street. The project is funded by West Virginia Turnpike bonds sold through Gov. Justice’s \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program.

Mountaineer Contractors was also awarded a \$10 million contract in October 2021 to completely rebuild MacCorkle Avenue from the ground up from 33rd to 40th Street. The work includes the construction of new sidewalks and drainage structures.

Mountaineer began paving work from 40th Street to 58th Street on Monday, Feb. 20, 2023. Paving will go on as work between 33rd and 40th streets continues. Traffic will be reduced to one

lane in each direction as contractors pave two blocks of MacCorkle Avenue at a time.

Contractors will mill off the old pavement to the concrete underneath and make any necessary concrete repairs before repaving MacCorkle Avenue. Work will begin at 40th Street and progress, two blocks a time, until contractors reach 58th Street.

Work on both projects is expected to be complete by the fall of 2024.

For more information on the two projects, live traffic feeds, and contact information, visit kanawhacityconstruction.com.

In May 2021, SQP Construction Group was awarded a contract for \$570,000 to install 105 ADA-compliant curb cuts along MacCorkle Avenue between 35th Street and 58th Street. Work on the curb cuts had to be completed before work could begin on the roadway.



Bailey Appointed Interim State Highway Engineer

Greg Bailey, P.E., was recently appointed West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Interim State Highway Engineer, replacing former State Highway Engineer Alan Reed, who retired in February.

Bailey served as WVDOH State Highway Engineer from July 2014 to March 2017. Prior to being named State Highway Engineer, Bailey served as the Deputy State Highway Engineer – Programming and Planning from May 2014 to July 2014.

Bailey served as the Director of the WVDOH Engineering Division from 2005 until taking the position of Deputy State Highway Engineer – Programming and Planning. Prior to that, he served as the Consultant Review Section Head for Engineering Division and was responsible for managing the work performed



by consulting engineering firms during the development of contract plans and design reports on WVDOH projects.

Bailey previously served as the Section Head for the Technical Section of Engineering Division.

He worked in the Consultant Review Section of the Structures Division before moving to the Technical Section.

Bailey is a former City Engineer and Public Works Director for the City of Charleston.

Bailey received his B.S. in Civil Engineering from West Virginia Tech in 1977 and his M.S. in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1981.

Bailey resides in Sissonville with his wife Debbie. They have been blessed with four children and nine grandchildren.

Daley Appointed District 4 Manager

Mike Daley was recently appointed District 4 Manager, a position in which he had previously been serving as Interim District Manager.

A Parkersburg High School Graduate, Daley attended West Virginia University, Marshall University, WVU Parkersburg and Frederick College in Frederick, Maryland.

Daley began his career with the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) in 1997 as a Transportation Worker II (TW2) in Parkersburg. He has worked at the Wood County maintenance headquarters as a TW2 TW3 and Crew Chief before being promoted to Ritchie County Highway Administrator.

Daley also worked as Wirt County Highway Administrator and as the Safety Officer for districts 3, 4 and 6.

Before being appointed District 4 Manager, Daley served as a Maintenance Assistant in District 3 and District 4. Daley teaches

Fire, Emergency Medical Services and Law Enforcement classes. He also teaches Department of Homeland Security Classes as well as a variety of Federal Emergency Management classes and National Incident Management courses.

Daley has also been a West Virginia Public Service Training Supervisor Instructor for Mountain State Education Services Cooperative, as an adult education Instructor for 43 years.

Daley has been married to his wife, Paula, for 40 years. They have one daughter and a granddaughter.

Catch Mike Daley on the 134th episode of WV on the DOT podcast. Visit transportation.wv.gov and click on Podcast to listen!



Roads to Prosperity Replaces Roy Gap Bridge

A 140-foot bridge now takes the place of a low water crossing at Seneca Rocks that was washed out by flooding and damaged by truck traffic. The project is paid for with funding from Gov. Jim Justice's \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program.

"This low water crossing provided the only emergency access into Seneca rocks for vehicles, and has been closed since it was damaged by a log truck in 2019," said State Bridge Engineer Tracy Brown, P.E. "Because of the nature of the project, it would have been very difficult to find funding for the new bridge without Gov. Justice's Roads to Prosperity program."

Gov. Justice awarded a \$1.5 million construction project to Wolf Creek Contracting in March 2022 to replace the low water crossing with a steel truss bridge. The bridge is now in place and contractors are set to complete the bridge approaches and deck.



The low water crossing carried Roy Gap Road over the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River at the base of Seneca Rocks, near the United States Forest Service Seneca Rocks Discovery Center.

A log truck damaged the pipes that carry water through the existing structure, causing water to run over the top. The

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) was forced to close the low water crossing in 2019, cutting off an access point for emergency vehicles into Seneca Rocks and homes in the area.

The new steel truss bridge is far enough above the water to eliminate problems with flooding. The new bridge and abutments include stamped and stained concrete and painted steel to blend in with the environment.

The project is expected to be complete by mid-summer.

District 9 Praised for Culvert Clearing Work

Crews in District 9 recently got this email after responding to clogged culverts on Little Wolf Creek Road in Summers County:

To District 9:

I am hoping that you are the right person to say this to, if not, that you will know who to send it to as a way of making sure the responsible people and their boss(s) know they are appreciated.

I have a little place on the gravel section of Little Wolf Creek Rd (Summers CO 14/3), we visit on occasion to enjoy the peace and solitude. Our fulltime home is in Jefferson County. Our address in Summers County is on Little Wolf Creek Road.

We arrived yesterday (21 Feb) for a few days and some overdue work projects, finding that the road was pretty badly affected by the local rains. This afternoon we took shovels and rakes out to the culvert outside of our driveway to clear debris and free the waterway into the culvert. It was pretty awful work, as you can imagine. My wife Kate commented how it'd be nice if someone would show up with a machine to do in five minutes what was

taking us all afternoon.

I replied to her that given all of the damage from the storms, our little spot would be way down on the list, but the they would eventually get there. We continued working.

So, about 2:30 we heard trucks coming up the road, and, voila!, there was a backhoe accompanied by some very nice gentlemen and trucks - who cleared the rest of the job we had worked and did so as gentlemen indeed, kind, hard working, and very friendly.

You should be very proud of these folks. They are part of the reason we love this little slice of heaven called Summer County, it is where good people live and work, doing things right and out of kindness.

Please let everyone who must that The Aclys at Little Wolf Creek Road are grateful for the care they take of our little road leading to our peaceful little spot.



Bluefield State to Host Southern Technical Conference

Bluefield State University is set to host its Sixth Annual Southern Technical Conference in April in conjunction with the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH).

The conference will be held Thursday, April 6, on the Bluefield State University (BSU) campus inside the Basic Science Auditorium. The

student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) at BSU will have the ability to meet, network and learn from dozens of engineering professionals in the region.

The 2023 event will be the first in-person conference in several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think this is very beneficial for the students," said Kerry D. Stauffer, Ph.D., P.E., P.S., Civil Engineering Technology Professor, ASCE Faculty Advisor.

"Not only the technical content that they'll be able to participate in but starting to form the framework of networking and some of those connections professionally."

The day will begin with registration, breakfast and a welcome from Stauffer. From 8:25 to 8:40 a.m. are opening remarks from Dr. Robin Capehart, Interim President of BSU and other BSU leaders.



Dale Hill, the executive director of Builders Supply Association of West Virginia is the first scheduled speaker from 8:40 to 9:35 a.m. Other scheduled speakers in the morning include John Tuggle, P.E., P.S., Executive Director and Lesley Taylor and Cassandra Lawson, Senior Project Specialists, for WV Region 4 Planning and Development Council.

Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief Engineer of District Operations is scheduled to speak about the WVDOH in 2023.

The afternoon speakers are scheduled to be Faheem Ahmad, P.E., S.E., of E.L. Robinson Engineering, Ryan Ward, a Senior Environmental Scientist with AllStar Ecology, and Stevie Steele, P.E., Key Account Manager for CHA Consulting, Inc.

Jimmy Wriston, P.E., West Virginia Department of Transportation Secretary and WVDOH Commissioner is scheduled to give closing remarks.

Stauffer said this conference has a history of students making important networking connections.

"We've had several students that have had job opportunities and end up going to work for some of the consultants and many of them the Division of Highways for West Virginia as a result of people they meet and talk to at this conference."

Governor's Highway Safety Program Stresses Seatbelts, Sobriety

In an ongoing effort to increase seat belt use in West Virginia, the GHSP is promoting a statewide Click It or Ticket high visibility mobilization March 3-19.

West Virginia law enforcement officers will be out in full force, ticketing seat belt violators who are caught traveling without a correctly buckled seat belt or transporting unrestrained children.

The 2022 Observational Seat Belt Survey results produced a usage rate of 92.5 percent, a new record. Though this increase is good news for West Virginia, the GHSP is working towards a

goal of zero fatalities on our roads and 100 percent usage rate is key to achieving that goal.

St. Patrick's Day falls on a Friday this year. Many people may want to celebrate with alcoholic beverages. If you plan to drink, make sure you do not drink and drive and make a plan before going out to get home safely. In 2020 alone, 37 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period (6 p.m. Thursday, March 16 to 5:59 a.m. Saturday, March 18, 2023). Ensure the Luck of the Irish is on your side by making the smart choice to not drink and drive.



Mollie Eplin on Cuckoos, Crop Dusting

Ten-year-old Mollie Eplin recently joined Jennifer Dooley and Randy Damron on the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) podcast “WV on the DOT” to talk about her father, Mike, and Uncle Scott, WVDOT Assistant Deputy Secretary of Transportation in charge of Emergency Operations.

The younger Eplin took a break from serving as a legislative page to discuss some of the more “cuckoo” antics of her father and uncle.

“(Uncle Scott’s) hair sometimes looks like a troll,” Mollie Eplin informed listeners. “He has a very messy garage. But he does have Cosmic Brownies a lot at his house.”

For the uninitiated, the Little Debbie confection



consists of an iced brownie with little candy buttons on top. They are often found on convenience store snack shelves – Editor

What’s the most “cuckoo” thing Scott Eplin ever did?

“He loves to tease people,” the younger Eplin said. She said her uncle once bought a can of fart spray and used it to accuse others of “crop dusting.”

Scott Eplin noted that his niece is very good at math and has some interest in becoming an engineer. Will she take over the WVDOT? Time will tell.

WVDOT Organizations Receive Thanks

On behalf of Chip McDowell (Director) and the Aviation Division:

We would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the supervisor and staff of the DOT Buckhannon facility last week.

On February 1, the state Bell 407 helicopter experienced maintenance issues that grounded the aircraft at the Clarksburg Bridgeport airport. On February 2, while exploring options for transporting the helicopter to our facility in Charleston, we reached out to the DOT Buckhannon office as they had provided transportation services for our agency in the past. On February 3, Supervisor Dustin Loudin arranged for a team and equipment to meet our mechanics at the airport and the helicopter was successfully transported on DOH trucks back to our facility in Charleston.

We appreciate their efforts and quick response and wanted to recognize, by name, the exceptional work of the following individuals:

- Dustin Loudin, Supervisor
- Jacob Johnson, Supervisor
- Rusty Farrar, TW4
- Lee Canfield, TW4
- Chad Loudin, TW4
- David Bauer, TW4

Wayne Webb, Customer Service Director, West Virginia Parkways Authority

I am writing to thank and recognize Ms. Tiffany Burdette of your company for her outstanding customer service today on my telephone interaction with her.

I called in response to notifications from WV Parkways Authority that my transponders were about to expire and that my credit card on file had been declined. I advised Ms. Burdette that my AmEx card on file had been “hacked” recently, provided her with my new card information and she promptly assisted me in updating my file, paying the fees, and updating my current email address.

Moreover, Ms. Burdette was extremely courteous, professional and pleasant during our encounter, which left me feeling valued, appreciated and very satisfied that my account was in good standing. As my wife and I are both native West Virginians who will be traveling to Fairmont next week to celebrate her mother’s 94th birthday, it felt good to be treated so well by your customer service staff member, as though we are being welcomed home. For that we are grateful and wanted to express our appreciation to Ms. Burdette and your company. Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Respectfully,
Patrick Sloan, Ph.D.
Johnson City, Tennessee





To SEC Wriston:

Appreciate WVDOH and your teams' efforts supporting us in receiving the \$1M dollar grant for the RCP grant. This will go a long way in making a generational change in Southern West Virginia. Our community and citizens are eternally grateful.

I also understand that often your job can be tough and perhaps thankless. I want you to know your efforts are not in vain and we appreciate you.

Ryland (Musick) is doing good work supporting us and I hope to see you soon down here when we get after it.

Have a great weekend.

--Cecil Marson, Bluefield City Manager



VISION AWARDS

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

David Oldaker—District 7

Kim Harrison—DMV

Kevin Manns—District 2

Stacey Johnson—District 2

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.

