

WV DOT Today!



The First 4-Lane In Wyoming County

West Virginia Division of Highways has opened the first 4-lane section of road, ever, in Wyoming County. The 8.87 mile Coalfields Expressway section between Slab Fork, in Raleigh County, and Mullens, in Wyoming County, is a Roads to Prosperity project that saves four out of every ten minutes driving time between Mullens and Beckley. That equals jobs, hope and accessibility. The stunning stretch of new concrete was all decked out in socially-distanced lawn chairs for a beautiful groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, October 1.

(Stop the presses; it was worth holding our September issue.) Immediately following the ceremony, as soon as the chairs were gone, every driver got to feel like their car was the best on the road — cruising along on the perfectly smooth concrete, marveling at the amount of rock and mountain moved for the road. WVDOH also honored *our* songwriter, Bill Withers, with a sign we were proud to erect—“Slab Fork; Home of Bill Withers.” With sunshine, a light breeze, and smiling faces under every mask, it was indeed a Lovely Day.



Also in This Issue:



Gold Star Families Memorial Highway



On September 30, 2020, a portion of the West Virginia Turnpike was dedicated at the “Gold Star Families Memorial Highway.” Signs have been posted from the I-77/I-64 split in Beckley to the Chuck Yeager Bridge in Kanawha City, reminding every person driving through of the sacrifice of families who have lost a loved one in service to our country. The gathering, held at Tamarack, was attended by several such families, who all stood in memory of those they lost.

Families also took the opportunity to honor Hershel “Woody” Williams, just shy of his 97th birthday, by singing “Happy Birthday” (masked, and with social distance maintained) as the staff at Tamarack presented him with a birthday cake.

West Virginia Department of Transportation was thankful for the opportunity to be a part of remembering the brave West Virginians who have served and the families who love them.

WVDOT Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Department of Transportation and distributed statewide via email to a strong network of hardworking employees. All content is developed by the editors, unless otherwise credited. 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 Department of Transportation** to give West Virginia the chance it should have to be a place where everyone can grow, and nothing can slow us down.

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We are recognizing our people.



The Leader in You

By Byrd White

A good leader must have ethics, a clear objective, and must form a team. A good leader must also communicate. Having clear, simple objectives is not enough, the leader must communicate these objectives to the team in a clear, concise message and the team must communicate with each other. It does not work well when each team member is in their own "silo", going their own way. It is the communication among each other that keeps the team focused on the objective. Staying focused on the objective results in success.

A good leader is also communicating to those outside the team. In the Government world, communication with the citizens is of utmost importance as is communication with customers in the business world. If the team does not communicate its objectives and its actions to those outside the team, others will, generally that does not turn out well.

As one contemplates how to communicate something, anything, the most important thing in communication, above all else; tell the truth!



Safety Officers Step Up

By Jake Bumgarner

2020 has brought many challenges and changes. COVID has to be considered at the top of the challenges that WVDOT has faced. It has forced all of us to change the way we meet, dress, work, and communicate. While there are many groups of folks that have stepped up during the last few months, the Safety Officers are a group that shined particularly bright during these unprecedented times.

This year has brought Operations Division and me a renewed interest and appreciation for the great work the Safety Officers do on a daily basis and the additional responsibilities thrust upon this group due to COVID. Towards the end of July, the State Safety Officer, Shane Hudnall, and the Safety Program were moved to Operations Division. At the beginning of the year, WVDOH had a few Districts without a Safety Officer. As such, Shane and the District Safety Officers did their best to cover those extra Districts. The Districts have now successfully hired a Safety Officer for every District for the first time in quite a few years.

I want to thank all the Safety Officers on behalf of all of WVDOT for what they have done during this pandemic. Behind the scenes, they have been working hard to protect us to the best of their abilities. This includes a number of late nights orchestrating the cleaning and disinfection of facilities when potential or confirmed positive cases of COVID are discovered. This is the same group of folks that are also called upon at all hours of the day and night to respond to incidents that occur on our roadway system. Their hard work and dedication is appreciated and being noticed.

Please remember the next time one of these Safety Officers reminds you to put on a vest, wear a hardhat or use 3 points of contact when getting on and off a piece of equipment; they do so because they have a passion for keeping you and everyone around you as safe as they can. Safety is a responsibility of everyone and we are lucky to have a group of folks willing to lead that charge so that we can hopefully all go home after each shift in the same condition we came to work.



NEW PODCAST - "WV ON THE DOT"



Now on the Soundcloud App!

New Shows: Thursday 4:00 p.m.

Transportation.wv.gov

Click on the Podcast link.

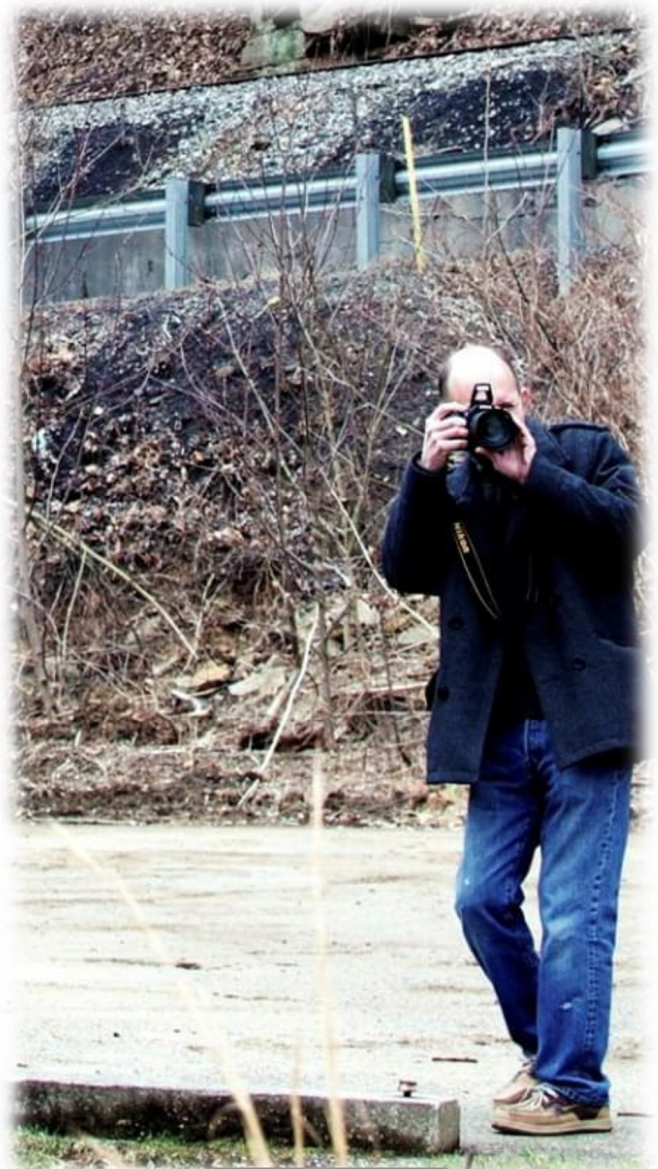


In Memory: Chad Cardinal, Esquire



Chad Cardinal was an excellent lawyer and an amazing human being. He worked for the State of West Virginia for over twenty years. Chad always had a smile on his face and was willing to help. Chad was the first person who greeted me and made me feel welcome when I started working at the Division of Highways and I know he was the first smiling face many people saw in the Legal Division as he always made an effort to greet new employees. During his time working for the State of West Virginia, Chad was a seasoned litigator who handled the most serious cases of wrongful deaths as well as minor pothole cases. But, regardless of whether the case was large or small, Chad always made time to listen to the citizen and assist them in whatever way he could. Chad will be greatly missed in the Legal Division.

- Stacy Jacques



Editor's Note: WVDOH's Legal Division recently lost a talented lawyer, photographer, author, cook, and friend. Several people from throughout WVDOH took the time to write, in memory of Chad Cardinal. While this particular editor didn't know him, something stands out that's always true; when people really hate that you're gone, that *always* means it was really good that you were here.

It is with much sadness which I write as we share in the loss of Chad Cardinal. He was a tremendous encouragement to me. As an engineer, I have benefited greatly from his wise council and critical thinking skills. Chad was certainly one of "My Favorite Lawyers." In conversation he was intelligent, articulate, and willing to listen to other viewpoints. And his story telling was unsurpassed. Whether he was talking about the founding fathers, or how to season an iron skillet, I was constantly enthralled. Chad's cheerful optimism always overshadowed his cynical edge. Chad will be missed by all who knew him.

- Anonymous



Photo Feature: A Lovely Day



Coalfields Expressway;

***A new 8.87 mile section.**

***From Slab Fork, Raleigh County.**

***To Mullens, Wyoming County.**

***Wyoming County's first 4-lane -
Ever!**

***Literally paving the way for
economic development.**



By Perry Keller

One of the ways the WVDOH keeps improving is through research. The WVDOH receives federal funding to conduct research on various subject matters that can ultimately improve efficiencies, modify specifications, extend longevity of facilities or otherwise improve our performance as an agency.

The Research Section of Planning Division works primarily with our Universities to scope and monitor their students and faculty as they work to make improvements to our ability to provide for a safer, more efficient infrastructure for WVDOH employees and the traveling public. Most of these projects include a technical sponsor within the WVDOH that assists in the monitoring and, at times, implementation of the research project.

Some of the ongoing research includes: Estimating the Magnitude of Peak Discharges for Rural, Unregulated Streams; Effect of Repeated Heat Strengthening on Behavior of Impacted Highway Bridge Steel Girders; Evaluation of Seed Mixtures for Construction Sites; Corrosion Research; as well as several "pooled" funded projects. Pooled funded projects are where States, with similar research needs join together to fund a larger, more robust project; for example, our participation in the Accelerated Performance Testing for Pavement.

In the near future the Research Section, along with Management, will solicit new problem statements that may improve our collective ability to deliver our mission or providing an efficient and safe roadway network for the traveling public. Please take a few moments to think of a potential project or projects that may assist in the delivery of our mission. Please forward any ideas to Perry Keller at perry.j.keller@wv.gov.

Happy back to school to West Virginia's future.

Whether you're attending classes in person or virtually, school is tough and WVDOH is proud of all of West Virginia's students.

We're taking care of the roads, because we want to take care of you, and give our state the chance it deserves.

Keep your chin up this very tough school year.
We believe in you.

By Natalie Holcomb

Everett Frazier was appointed to lead the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (WVDMV) in the beginning of 2020. With barely enough time to get his feet wet, COVID-19 changed the working landscape for everyone, especially a very public-facing agency like the DMV. This certainly was not what he expected, but according to American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Member Support Director Patrice Aasmo, the responsiveness of the DMV's executive staff, led by Commissioner Frazier, was nothing short of spectacular.

She said, "I cannot over-emphasize how quickly your Executive Team came together to make difficult decisions to keep the business running for your constituents! WV was influential on the national front in finding out-of-the-box solutions for servicing customers while keeping them safe, and was there with the AAMVA community to share with colleagues and transportation safety officials across the US and Canada."

Some of those out-of-the box solutions include a brand new appointment scheduling system, contactless driver skills testing, reinstatement of a call center, secure drop boxes for titling and registration outside regional offices, and safety upgrades to regional offices including plexiglass screens and additional cleaning and sanitization practices and personal protective equipment. All of this was done in a matter of weeks - no small feat, particularly for a new Administrator. Additionally, DMV accomplished these adaptations while continuing to move forward on many other projects, including a new driver's license system and other modernization practices that will make DMV processes even more customer-friendly and efficient.

Commissioner Frazier continues to lead the WVDMV with the focus on customer service, as well as keeping an eye on what other states are doing that West Virginia might adopt. He believes in sharing ideas to bring the best service, not only to West Virginia, but across the United States. Aasmo adds, "WV has been and is committed to remain involved with the AAMVA community to stay abreast of the many timely and relevant topics in the transportation safety space."

Many kudos to Commissioner Frazier and team for adapting, being proactive, and making customer service in this time of uncertainty and change a priority. Not just for West Virginia, but for the betterment of all.





***A Few Words on Why We're Here,
From; Marvin Murphy, P.E.***

"I love West Virginia," said Marvin Murphy, P.E., Executive Assistant to the Secretary of Transportation's Office and 50 year employee of WVDOT. "It's heartbreaking to drive around, out around from the big places and down in the country. Even on my own road where I was born and raised, it's hard to drive down that road. It's down to nothing now."

"I think we can make a difference," Murphy said, with wisdom well-earned on the reason we're here. "Sometimes it makes a difference if you just do something that's, even in a small town, you do something and it makes the town look better and everything like that. You always need your towns, when they're coming into town, to look good."

"We've had good times before, I'm not saying that at all, but this is one of the improved times, that we've had an opportunity to finally make some big improvements," said Murphy. "We had the one stimulus, and I was in charge there and we got it done, mostly with in-house people doing a lot of the work, but we couldn't make the big impact that we can now."

After nearly 50 years with WVDOT, Murphy continues to serve the public with pride, integrity and honesty. "They call and want to talk to me, I'll talk to them. I don't go out there to say 'no,' I go out there to see what I can do, and what needs to be done. You can't always do exactly what they want, but sometimes you can do something that helps them out, and they like that too. If you can't do it, or you're going to do it sometime down the road, you need to tell them and live up to that."

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 to go Above and Beyond.

Hussein Elkhansa, M.S.E., G.I.S.P.—Strategic Performance Management

Josh Anderson, P.E.—District 10

Tamara Davis—District 8

Greg Bailey, P.E.—Deputy State Highway Engineer

Mike Spry—District 2

Gary Freeman—District 7

Kathy Rushworth—District 1

Evan Dewey—Finance

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.

To take pride in all we do.



D-2: Why Are You Here?

By Jonathan Clark

The Division of Highways (DOH) team has always helped each other regardless of district boundaries on a map. However, people and organizations hesitated to cross district lines in the past. To have the best state, DOH, and community we work as a team.

District Two has reached out across the district lines to help where it is needed. The District Two Bridge Department has sent inspectors in past years to help other districts with bridge inspections. We have helped statewide across with the underwater inspection of bridges. The bridge inspectors have dived bridges from Wheeling to Charleston to Morgantown looking at the underwater substructures in lakes and rivers.

District Two has helped and assisted other districts and divisions with designs across the state. Some of the work performed are hydraulic models and a complete bridge design with District One. We have worked on bridge deck overlays to assist Districts One and Seven. Been project managers for Engineering Section on District Two larger projects including the James River overpass, Baisden Family Memorial Bridge and Miller Road overpass Design Build. Currently working on a joint program with the Engineering Design Section to work hand-in-hand on a 150'-0" bridge design in Wayne County, which is usually reserved for consultants, but is being done in-house.

District Two is not the only District who helps in other areas of the state. For example, an expansion joint broke out on I-64 in District Two and the closest repair unit was working over two hours away. District One did not hesitate to send their bridge repair crews. This is just one of many examples I could share with you of Districts reaching out and helping one another. At the DOH, that is what we do.

We are often asked why are you here in another district? For us in District Two that answer is easy. We are a team, and we want nothing but the best for the DOH. It happens time and time again where equipment, labor, materials, or aid is shared between sections, counties, and districts. We live here, drive here, and want to be the best.

Allow me to introduce to you some of the great employees who make our Bridge Department thrive: The bridge design has 2 professional engineers, Barry Hatfield, and Chase Lindsey. One professional engineer in our Evaluation Staff, Edward Armbruster. We have 3 staff engineers-in-training, Jesse Mullins, Ashton Rickman, and Andrew Scarberry. We have 12 bridge inspectors: Mark Jordan, John West, Roddy Hughes, Josh Shelton, Shaun Maynard, Justin Chapman, Ryan Hall, Brandon Coleman, Jarred Baker, Harley Justice, Greg Porter and Tyler Perry **(continued, bottom of next column.)**

In a Round-About Way



WVDOT is making a big difference, in a Round-About Way!

The Williamstown Roundabout, at WV 14 and WV 31, is scheduled to be finished by contractor Kelly Paving in spring of 2021. Photo courtesy of Josh Smith, P.E., D-3 Construction Engineer.

West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest

Coming Soon: 20th Annual Competition



This year's Virtual competition will honor the tradition of celebrating and appreciating students, and their families and teachers, as we introduce engineering to a new generation of West Virginia middle and high school students.

(Continued.) There are currently 17 team members on our Repair Crew: Brian Adkins, Jimmy Brumfield, Chris Cearley, Ryan Clagg, David Crabtree, Samuel Egan, Phillip Hively, Tim Johnson, James Miller, Robert Nutter, Terry Parsons, Justin Riggs, Mike Setliff, Walter Thompson, Jeffery Walker, Stephen Wallace and James Wiley.



Equipment Training Academy

By Aaron Stroud

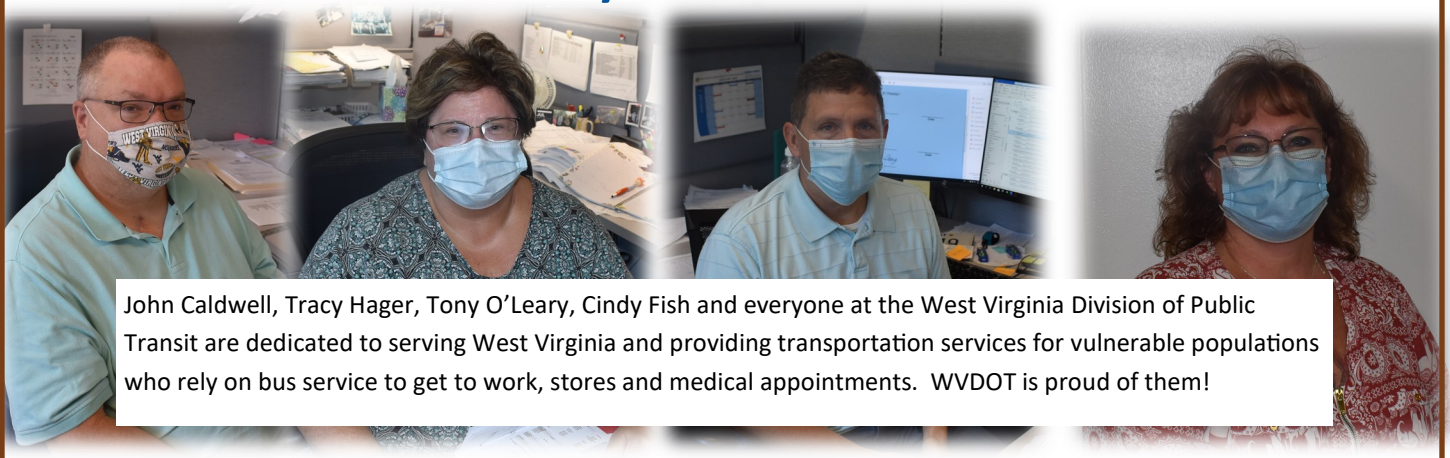
The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely made for an extremely unusual, and at times, very difficult year. However, at the WVDOH Equipment Operators Training Academy it taught them to think outside of the box. Even with all the challenges that the pandemic has presented, the staff worked hard to find solutions and make adjustments that allowed them to continue to train operators.

The Training Academy started the summer season with a newly developed training for some equipment new to the DOH... the Roadtec pavers had arrived. With some help from Scott Kelly in District 3 and great support from our Operations and Equipment Divisions, the first ever official Paver training class was held. This class was later followed with a second round of field training for our paving crews, with help from the training team at Roadtec. The summer also included the yearly Certified Equipment Training for Graders, Backhoe, Track Excavator, and Rubber Tire Excavator (Gradall). Again, with some creative thinking the Training Academy saw success. Some new certification training is being developed for Dozers and Boom Mowers and will be delivered in conjunction with the National Guard at the Camp Dawson facility in Preston County. This new partnership will be combined training and testing by both Training Academy staff and trainers at the National Guard Jobs and Hope program. This fall, the Training Academy plans on making a hard push to get End Loader training completed before SRIC hits, but will continue to conduct classes for as long as weather permits. The Training Academy staff looks forward to the opportunity to expand their offerings in 2021, including the development of a YouTube Channel that will provide a variety of educational videos. Additionally, they are very excited about being able to train and certify motor grader operators on seven new John Deere graders that the Equipment Division is providing.



Focus on Public Transportation

By Jesse Ward



John Caldwell, Tracy Hager, Tony O'Leary, Cindy Fish and everyone at the West Virginia Division of Public Transit are dedicated to serving West Virginia and providing transportation services for vulnerable populations who rely on bus service to get to work, stores and medical appointments. WVDOT is proud of them!



Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,

My name is Holly and I am the Toll Administrative Assistant and also the North Beckley Toll Plaza Supervisor. I have been employed with the WV Parkways Authority since November 6, 2000. I started out as a temporary toll collector at the Ghent (Barrier A) toll plaza and then promoted to part time and full time. I continued to advance with the WV Parkways by promoting to Foreman at the Ghent (Barrier A) toll plaza and Supervisor at the Pax (Barrier B) toll plaza. I have been in my current position since December 9, 2017. I also fill in for the Toll Messenger when needed.

It's hard to believe that almost twenty years has gone by. Starting out as temporary was tough but it was definitely worth it. The WV Parkways has provided for my family and I am very thankful. A strong work ethic and dependability has helped me achieve my goals. The WV Parkways has been a pleasure to work for and has many outstanding employees!

- Holly Meadows

Dear Editors,

Janet Ebarb has worked for WV DOH for 26 years and plans to retire at the end of October. She has worked in Programming Division since 1994 when it was the Project Control Division reporting to Division Director John J. Welch. I have worked in this "Division" all 26 years. Division Directors have retired or moved on and the Division name has changed over the 26 years, but Janet has remained dedicated worker, always available when needed for any reports, especially when the Legislature was in session.

She was hired as a computer programmer to expand/revamp Project Tracking System as it was defined in 1994 and also to take over the responsibility of reports produced from PTS. (John Welch was primarily creating/running the reports') PTS has evolved over the years. Her primary duties are to provide accurate PTS reports to all levels of WVDOH management and maintain the integrity of the PTS data.

She liked that her job duties constantly change. "It is never a dull moment working for the Programming Division. Once she is retired, she plans to sleep in, enjoy friends and family activities, golfing, fishing, skiing. Maybe a little traveling. She says, "My family is great, but I will miss the craziness dealing with the projects." We will miss having Janet, she is a great person, a team player who even came in on her days off to help sometimes with reports, helping create the new project tracking system, finding errors before they go out, helping

make sure everyone could successfully work from home during COVID, and even being our own personal IT person when we messed up a printer or computer!

- Eva Melancon

Dear Editors,

Hey, I really like the podcast! Have you thought about advertising job openings or talking about an open position within the DOT at the end of the podcast?

- James Dishner

Dear James,

Are you the same James Dishner we know from the Bridge Design and Build Contest?

That's a good idea about job openings on the podcast.

This week's show (rewind; September 3) will be of interest to anyone considering working with us, but I won't give it away until it 'airs.'

Thank you for listening,

- Editors

Dear Editors,

I am surprised you remembered me from the contest, it's been a few years. In 2016, my balsa bridge was the one that held 42.6 pounds before breaking. I remember they had to bring in a larger bucket because we filled the first one. Although structures holds a special place in my heart, I am working in water resources. I look forward to the next show.

- James

Dear James, (and all other former West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest students!)

Awesome. Thanks for listening. We're making WVDOT an even better place to work, so if you ever get bored, come join us. (You won't get bored here.)

- Editors

Reminder—COVID-19 didn't go away, and it's not better than it was in March. Mask up! Wash up! Keep socially distancing! We're doing this for each other's health and safety, while we maintain West Virginia's economy. We've got to stay together.

