

WVDOT Today!



September 2021—Volume 3: Issue 9



“This group of people has done more in the past two-and-a-half years than any group I’ve ever been with,” said Byrd White, retiring Secretary of Transportation. “My partner Jimmy Wriston, I’ve never had one like him. I’ve never had somebody I was just in lockstep with every day. It’s been a real pleasure. It’s been a big deal to me. You are all a big deal to me. It’s like a team, and I’ve watched it coalesce in the past two years to where everybody is working together for the good of each other.” From paving with our own pavers, to the Classification and Compensation Career Plan, to increased cooperation with agencies throughout state government, to working through COVID without the layoffs other state DOT’s faced; there’s a lot to be proud of. “This has been a tough decision,” said Byrd of his retirement. “I can’t express my gratitude.”

Well wishes from throughout the WVDOT will be shared throughout this issue. And for a special message from Byrd, listen to this week’s WV on the DOT podcast.



Oakwood R-Cut First in West Virginia

A new traffic pattern at Charleston's Oakwood Road interchange goes into effect with the opening of a new RCUT intersection.

RCUT stands for Restricted Crossing U-Turn. What it will mean for drivers on Corridor G and Oakwood Road in Charleston is shorter wait times at the Oakwood interchange traffic light and smoother-flowing traffic.

West Virginia Division of Highways decided to build an RCUT at Oakwood to solve a very specific problem.

Traffic backs up badly in the mornings, when drivers are trying to get to several area schools; in the afternoons, when school lets out; during rush-hour traffic in the evenings; and during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season.

The new RCUT is expected to greatly improve traffic flow at the intersection by eliminating left-hand turns off of Oakwood Road.

At the old intersection drivers on both Oakwood Road and Corridor G had to wait for left turn arrows before proceeding through the intersection, increasing wait times at the traffic

light, particularly during peak traffic times.

Drivers travelling north and south on Corridor G – where the majority of traffic is – will still be able to make a left turn onto Oakwood Road, assisted by left turn arrows. But drivers on Oakwood Road will only be able to turn right.

With the new traffic pattern, motorists coming from the east side of Oakwood

(where the schools are located) who want to head north on Corridor G toward Charleston will turn right like they always have. Drivers who want to head south toward Southridge Shopping Center will turn right and proceed north to the new RCUT at Hickory Road, where a traffic light will allow them to turn left onto Corridor G heading south.



WVDOT Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Department of Transportation's Public Relations Division. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WVDOT employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Department of Transportation.**

West Virginia Division of Highways
Attn: WVDOT Public Relations
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 5, Room A-137
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Editors: Jennifer Dooley and Randy Damron;
Copy Editor and Staff Writer: Rusty Marks.

Proofreaders: Peggy Armstrong and Alanna Keller

Submit articles, letters, suggestions, and Vision Award nominations to;
Jennifer.J.Dooley@wv.gov.



Retired on a Tuesday

“He was always very accessible, very personable, and he always listened. That’s valuable.” – Bill Robinson, Executive Director, West Virginia Division of Public Transit

“Any time I came in with a question, he had an answer. That’s a tough thing to pull off as a manager. And he wasn’t concerned about the consequences, so long as a decision was the right thing to do for the state and the people of West Virginia.” – Sean Hill, Executive Director, West Virginia Aeronautics Commission

“I appreciate how he kept the vision of one DOT going. His leadership allowed us to work with DOH, and he was interested in us. I’m going to miss him.” – Cindy Butler, Executive Director, West Virginia State Rail Authority

“This is the second time I worked for Byrd. I was county administrator when he was a Raleigh county commissioner. I consider him to be a mentor. Under Byrd, the Turnpike has been able to start some very big projects that we might not have otherwise done. His leadership style allows people to do their job, but he’s always there for guidance.” – Jeff Miller, Executive Director, West Virginia Parkways Authority

“He was a big supporter of getting our employees the tools they need and getting stuff done. The past two years have probably seen the most work done and the most projects completed than ever before in Highways. I don’t know that I’ve ever worked for another Secretary who cared as much about his employees as Byrd did.” – Arlie Matney, District 1 Manager

“We are a maintenance-first organization. In my 22 years in DOH we’ve talked a lot about it, but under his leadership we really ARE a maintenance-first organization. He’s not one to say a lot of words, but the words he does say are important.” – Rob Pennington, District 2 Engineer

“He seems like a total gentleman. He’s always responsive when we need something from him, and he remembers everybody’s name.” – Justin Smith, District 3 Engineer

“With Byrd and the current management, I’ve never felt more connected to Charleston. I never felt like I couldn’t just pick up the phone and talk person-to-person to him



about something. He really did care about the employees.” – Tony Clark, District 6 Engineer

“It’s been a pleasure working for Byrd. He had vision, and he set the bar high for us. The results are showing in the quality of the roads we’re seeing.” – Jamie Rossi, District 8 Engineer

“He posed us many challenges and goals, which made the Division of Highways and the state of West Virginia a better place. He never said we have problems. He said we have challenges and opportunities.” – Joe Pack, Acting District 9 Engineer

“Byrd White always pushed you to do your best, and nothing less. Byrd White believed in us. To believe in the organization is to believe in the people.” – Ryland Musick, Acting District 10 Engineer

“Secretary White will be missed, tremendously. I always appreciated how available and engaged he was with DMV, especially during this pandemic. We collaborated multiple times on projects, as he is a big advocate of modernization, technology enhancements, and just providing excellent customer service regardless of the circumstance. He answered my calls – day, night or weekend – and most importantly, he has been a great friend and his shoes will be hard to fill.” – Everett Frazier, Commissioner, West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles



Demolition Starts on Grant Street Bridge

Demolition work has begun on Bluefield's Grant Street Bridge. The bridge is being torn down to make way for an all-new span.

The bridge, built in 1941 to provide access from downtown Bluefield and Princeton Avenue to the town's North End and East Side, has been closed since June 2019, leaving motorists with a lengthy detour to get in and out of those parts of town.

In October 2020, Governor Jim Justice announced \$10.5 million in federal, state and local funding to replace the decaying structure. Division of Highways helped hammer out an agreement between Norfolk Southern Corporation and the city of Bluefield, who jointly owned the old bridge.

Under the agreement, Norfolk Southern agreed to turn over ownership of the bridge to the city of Bluefield, and agreed to give city officials \$500,000 as local match funding for



construction. The West Virginia Division of Highways agreed to manage the project, with \$8 million in funding from the Federal Highway Administration and \$2 million in funding from state sources.

In the spring of 2021, Brayman Construction Corporation was awarded a contract for \$8,097,117.21 to tear down the old bridge and replace it with a brand-new structure.

Replacement of the bridge will provide easy access to all parts of town and US 19.

Demolition of the existing bridge was scheduled to begin Monday, August 2, 2021, and last about seven months. Due to the way the bridge was originally built, it will be disassembled one piece at a time.

The new bridge, built on the same footprint as the existing span, will be 330 feet long. Construction is expected to take about six months.

DOH Like an Extended Family

I want to share a story with you. My name is Dee Brown and I am the Comptroller here at the Equipment Division in Buckhannon. I have been employed at this location for 30 years now.

I was blessed with a son, Zachary Post, in 1987. He was a graduate of Fairmont State College with a degree in Criminal Justice, and was employed at Hazelton Federal Prison. Zachary passed by suicide on November 14, 2012.

Zachary had a lifelong group of young men that he grew up with. They would camp at Gauley River each year, so they became referred to as the "Gauley River Boys." After Zachary's passing, this group of young men created a non-profit organization called "The Gauley River Boys." These young men then decided to start a fundraising event in honor and memory of my son. The biggest of these events is a golf tournament that is held yearly. We just had the "8th Annual Zach Post Go Big or Go Home" tournament. That event was held on July 17, 2021, at the Buckhannon Country Club.

Of course, due to Covid, we were unable to have the tournament last year. But in 2019 we raised \$10,000.00. The proceeds that are raised are awarded to a Buckhannon Upshur

High School graduate, attending an in-state college, majoring in criminal justice, psychology, social work, nursing, or something along the social services line.

The reason I am wanting to specifically tell you my story is that my co-workers here in the Main Administrative Building gave me a donation for the scholarship/golf tournament of over \$600.00. I also had an employee at District 7 (Upshur County) donate a handmade lap blanket for our silent auction. I was absolutely shocked and touched. These people have been here for me since day one. I still struggle from time to time but they are always here. This is my extended family, and I am so grateful to have them.

Today I was informed of the total amount from the event - it raised over \$11,000!!!

Sometimes DOH people are looked at in such a negative light. It's times like today that boost us back up and erase all the negativity.

Dee Brown
Comptroller
WV Division of Highways Equipment Division
Buckhannon



Dooley Noted: Work-Life Balance

Look up “work-life balance” on the internet and you get unplugged, away from sounds and chaos, some place cool and green with a lazy river flowing eternally through a peaceful valley. It’s all good. And it’s all necessary. And I don’t look things up on the internet and fling them into the newsletter, so if you want it there, go find it — off the internet, all over our state.

When I think “work-life balance” I think of something in addition to that, which makes spending a large chunk of life at work a lot more whole. To have a good “work-life balance” there’s no amount of getting away that could make up for wasting this chance — you have to still be alive when you’re at work.

Here we are, 2021, we have an opportunity. There are towns all over our state that have fallen into disrepair; we can make all the roads good, fresh, bright. There are people whose hope has

slowly just sunk, believing in bright things until one day, finally they just don’t; we can offer a new future.



We’re one state agency among others, and not only can we enjoy the partnership with our sister agencies but we can set an example. We’re a powerhouse. We made all the potholes flat and square. We’re completing projects folks only talked about for decades. We’re pulling the condition of our bridges up, so they won’t be too far gone for the money we have years from now — they will still safely carry us across rivers. It’s a big deal. It’s a heavy, heavy lift. And we’re

absolutely the right agency to carry it, because we have people every day who come to work alive.

Talk about work-life balance? We actually live inside the state where we work; we can’t look in any direction without seeing— this is us. Our time here is really *the time of our lives*.

Breakfast With Byrd



Child Passenger Safety Week

Best Practices Keep Them Safe at Every Age



Do you know if your child's car seat is correctly installed in your vehicle? Do you know if your child is in the right seat for his or her weight or height? Do you know that it's equally important to not only choose a child safety seat that fits your child properly, but also your vehicle? Do you know that there are nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST) across West Virginia who can help answer these questions?

Child Passenger Safety Week is recognized annually to bring awareness to these questions and more. This year, Child Passenger Safety Week will be observed September 19-25, 2021. The West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) encourages parents and caregivers to take a few minutes out of their busy day to have a Child Passenger Safety Technician take a second look at their children's car seats and booster seats, to ensure that they fit their children appropriately, and they are correctly installed in their vehicle.

Check out these facts about why it is so important to make sure the car seat you use is appropriate for the child's size and is installed correctly:

- Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children.
- On average, two children under 13 were killed, and an estimated 374 were injured every day in 2019 while riding in cars, SUVs, pickups, and vans.
- In 2019, 608 child passenger vehicle occupants died in traffic crashes, compared to 636 in 2018. This is a 4% decrease in fatalities between 2018 and 2019, and also a 5-year low.
- In 2019, 38% of children who died while riding in passenger vehicles were unrestrained, compared to 33% in 2018.
- Of the children under 13 involved in crashes in 2019, an estimated 13% were injured. The number of children injured in a crash remained steady, with an estimated 14% injured in 2017 and 2018.
- In 2019, 47% of unrestrained children killed in vehicle crashes were riding in vans, followed closely by SUVs (42%),

and light trucks (42%). Children are safest when secured in the proper car seats or booster seats for their ages and sizes.

Most parents are confident that they have correctly installed their child's car seat, but in most cases (46%), the seat has not been installed correctly. The best way to know if your child's car seat is correctly installed is to have a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician inspect the seat in your vehicle.

Once children grow enough to fit into booster seats, there are other issues that become apparent. Booster seats are an essential step between car seats and seat belts. These transitional seats position the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body. Often, parents feel pressured to put their child in a seat belt too soon. If a child has not exceeded the height or weight limit for the booster, a booster seat is still the safest place for your child to be.

If your child is ready to use a seat belt, ensure the seat belt fits correctly: The seat belt should lie across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest. The knees should comfortably bend over the edge of the seat. Remember that seat belts should never rest on the stomach area, across the face, or cut into the neck.

National Seat Check Saturday is September 25. While the COVID-19 pandemic may change the availability of certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians, they may be available in your community. Call ahead to schedule an appointment. These men and women will explain and demonstrate how to use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts correctly. Free of charge, the technicians will help educate consumers on choosing the correct car seat, installing that seat correctly in their vehicle, and using that seat correctly every time.

For a listing of fitting stations in West Virginia, visit dmv.wv.gov/cps. You can also find child car seat tips on the GHSP's social media channels at facebook.com/wvghsp or twitter.com/WVhighwaysafety.

A little info about the GHSP: Each state is required by Federal statute to have a highway safety program. West Virginia's program falls under the Division of Motor Vehicles. Our mission is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities on West Virginia's roadways. We do this through concerted media and enforcement efforts in an attempt to change driver behavior. We want YOU to be safe on the roadways so that we are ALL safe on the roadways. For more information, please visit the dmv.wv.gov/ghsp.



Bill Noe Flight School Opens in Charleston

West Virginia Aeronautics Commission Director Sean Hill was recently on hand to witness a ribbon cutting for Marshall University's Bill Noe Flight School. The commercial aviation training school, located at Yeager Airport in Charleston, was scheduled to open for the fall semester on Monday, Aug. 23, 2021.

The West Virginia Aeronautics Commission, part of the West Virginia Department of Transportation, played an important role in bringing airport officials, officials from Marshall and the Federal Aviation Administration together to get the project off the ground. In addition, Gov. Jim Justice matched federal funding to help build a road to the facility, which is located on a former runway.

Marshall University President Jerome A. Gilbert, Yeager Airport Director Nick Keller, Huntington Mayor Steve Williams, Charleston Mayor Amy Goodwin, Kanawha County officials and flight school namesake Bill Noe took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the flight school on Tuesday, Aug. 10.

"The Aeronautics Commission played a key role in furthering aeronautic education in West Virginia," said Keller. "The road opened up all this land for development."

Boeing and others in the airline industry have predicted the need for tens of thousands of new pilots and aircraft technicians

in the next 20 years. Once fully up and running, the Bill Noe Flight School will enroll 200 students a year, and graduate 50 new pilots.

Graduates of the flight school will be qualified to fly commercial airliners. The flight school will eventually have 15 to 20 aircraft, both single-engine trainers and twin-engine trainers necessary for pilots to qualify to fly multi-engined aircraft.

Noe, a Marshall University graduate and lifelong pilot with 15,000 hours of flight time, is chief operating officer of NetJets, the world's first and largest jet charter service. He has taken an active role in the development of the flight school that bears his name.

Sean Hill said supporting the flight school and Yeager Airport are part of the commission's ongoing mission to further aviation in the Mountain State.

"This is a great moment for aviation in West Virginia," Hill said. "I cannot commend Yeager Airport and Marshall University enough for bringing this concept to reality. Just think, a kid could play on the playground at this airport, look up and fall in love with aviation. They get a little bit older and enroll in this flight school, or at one of the technician programs across the state. The circle of inspiring future aviators is coming together with the completion of this school.

"A great benefit of today is that with Marshall University investing the time and resources in an aviation program, other universities and community technical colleges are opening their eyes to the potential at hand," he said.



WV on the DOT
New Shows: Thursday 4:00 p.m.
[Transportation.wv.gov](https://www.transportation.wv.gov)
Click on the Podcast link.
Or listen on the Soundcloud app.



The Right Choice at Rail Crossings Could Save Your Life. Stop. Trains Can't.



Beginning September 6 and running through September 27, 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are joining together for the *Stop. Trains Can't.* safety campaign to remind drivers to yield or stop at highway-rail grade crossings and be alert for the approach of light rail transit. The campaign's focus is to help reduce collisions, deaths and injuries at freight and commuter train and rail transit train crossings. This campaign will coincide with Rail Safety Week, which will take place September 20–26, 2021.

Whether it's a freight or commuter train, or light or passenger rail, given their size, weight, and mass, trains need a long time to stop, even after emergency brakes are applied. Ignoring warning devices or traffic signals, or attempting to go around a lowered crossing gate arm, can have deadly consequences for you, anyone in your motor vehicle, those operating or traveling on a train or even those living and working near rail lines.

According to FRA, in 2020, there were 1,377 motor vehicle collisions at public rail grade crossings, resulting in 94 fatalities and 494 people injured. Between 2016 and 2020, there were 7,800 collisions between freight and commuter trains and motor vehicles, resulting in 624 fatalities and 3,128 people injured at public rail grade crossings.

According to FTA, in 2020, there were 449 motor vehicle collisions at rail transit train crossings, resulting in seven fatalities and 139 people injured.

Whether it was freight or commuter train, or light or passenger rail, many of these crashes were caused by risky driving behaviors and poor decision-making, which means the incidents and deaths could have been prevented.

Under perfect conditions, the average passenger car traveling at 55 miles per hour can make an emergency stop in about 200 feet, whereas a light rail train requires about 600 feet—the length of two football fields—to stop. An average-length freight train traveling at 55 miles per hour may take the length of 18 football fields to stop.

"Due to optical effects, most people misjudge an approaching train's speed and distance from the crossing. It's like trying to

guess the height or speed of an airplane in the sky," said Bob Tipton, Director of the West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program.

By law, freight and commuter trains always have the right-of-way at rail crossings. There are 125,500 public railroad crossings in the United States, and roughly 56% are "active" crossings that include warning devices such as gates, bells or flashing lights to alert drivers of an approaching train. But 44% are "passive" crossings, meaning only signs and markings are present. While warning devices do improve safety at railroad crossings, they do not prevent 100% of collisions. Approximately 60% of collisions at railroad crossings occur where active warning devices are present. When approaching a highway-rail grade crossing, slow down, look and listen for a train on the tracks, especially at "passive" crossings. At night, and even during the day, look carefully in both directions before crossing a track.

"Even if you travel the same route every day, it's a very bad idea to rely on past experiences to guess when a train is coming," Tipton said. "Freight trains don't always travel on the same schedule and passenger rail train schedules can change. Also, many people don't realize that trains can approach from either direction at any time, especially in locations with multiple tracks. Before driving over a rail crossing, be certain there is enough room on the other side of the tracks for your vehicle to fully clear the crossing. Be aware that you may need to cross multiple sets of tracks at some rail crossings."

Never stop on the tracks. Keep moving once you have entered the crossing and, to avoid stalling, never shift gears on the tracks. If your vehicle does stall on a rail grade track—even if you don't see a train coming—quickly move all occupants out and away from your vehicle and the track. Run toward the train and away from the tracks. If you run in the same direction that the train is traveling, you could be hit by flying debris when the train hits your car. When it's safe to do so, call the number on the blue Emergency Notification System sign. If the sign is not visible to you, dial 911 for help.

For more information, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/railroad-crossing>.



DOH Scholarships: Investing in the Future

West Virginia Division of Highways celebrated the future of the organization recently with a reception to present scholarship awards to promising college students looking for a career.

The West Virginia Division of Highways Scholarship Program was created in 2016 as a recruiting tool to allow DOH to choose and reward the brightest college students who are looking for a career within the organization. Upon serving a year working with DOH as a Co-Op and entering their junior year of college, students can apply to WVDOH Scholarship Program, where they are eligible for up to \$3,000 a semester towards their educations. Scholarship recipients agree to work for DOH for a few years in exchange for the scholarships.

Obviously, DOH hopes they will choose to stay longer and make DOH their careers.

“It means a lot to us to have a pool of people to work with us for the future,” Deputy State Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston told scholarship recipients at an awards ceremony Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021. “You’re going to go through your college experience without worrying where you’re going to work. We’re right here waiting for you.”

Natasha White, director of DOH’s Human Resources Division, said the scholarship program is one of DOH’s most important recruiting tools for young talent.

“This is something that we take so seriously that it’s actually in West Virginia Code that we have to have it,” White said. Rules and conditions of the scholarship program are written into state law.

Previously only available to engineering students, the scholarship program was recently expanded. Currently students majoring in engineering, accounting, information technology and environmental pursuits are eligible for the program.



This year’s scholarship recipients include:

Cody Blankenship, a mechanical engineering major at West Virginia Tech.

Allison Facemire, a civil engineering major at West Virginia Tech.

Emily Glover, a civil engineering technology major at Fairmont State College.

Justin Huffman, a civil engineering major at West Virginia Tech.

Eamlim Seang, an engineering major at Marshall University.

Robert Arnold, an engineering major at Fairmont State College. (Not pictured.)

Caitlyn Curry, an accounting major at Marshall University.

DOH looks forward to working with all the scholarship recipients for many years into the future.

“You’re going to enjoy it,” Secretary White told the scholarship recipients. “You’re going to enjoy learning from all these people.”

Students interested in finding out more about the program may contact the DOH Human Resources Division at 304-558-3111.

Meet Public Transit Director Bill Robinson

Bill Robinson is executive director of the West Virginia Division of Public Transit, which receives and disburses funding for 18 public transit agencies in West Virginia and about 60 nonprofits. He and his nine employees also provide oversight and guidance and are in charge of safety for WVU’s PRT system.

“We’re more than just the guys who right the check and forget about it,” he stresses.



Robinson grew up in the Cross Lanes area and graduated from West Virginia State College (now West Virginia State University). He has worked for West Virginia state government for nearly 40 years, most of it within the Department of Transportation. He has been Public Transit Director for seven years.

Robinson has a wife, Tammy, and grown children Nick and Megan. When not working he is a successful musician, capable of playing several instruments.



The Mysteries of Insurance Benefits

Adding a Newborn

By Angia Hughes

Perhaps you have had these questions, but you were unsure about asking—or maybe unsure who to ask. We seek to assist you with obtaining the answers you need. In this issue, we are discussing the addition of a newborn child to coverages.

Maybe you just had a new baby, and you have been asking, “How does PEIA know to add my baby to my insurance plan? How much time do I have to add them? Who can I ask?”

It can be an exciting and overwhelming time! Your first step to get your new child added to coverage would be to contact your District or Division HR associate who assists with Benefits. They will instruct you to complete a Change in Status form. With that Change in Status form, you will need to include the child’s Birth Certificate. You likely may not have the official Birth Certificate from the Department of Vital Statistics yet. Until you receive that, you can use the copy of the Hospital Birth Record that the hospital should have given to you. Even if you don’t have the hospital birth record yet, go ahead and get the Change in Status form turned in so it can be forwarded for processing. Do not hold the form while you wait for the Birth Certificate. PEIA will go ahead and add the child in pending status until you submit the Birth Certificate.

Remember: The Qualifying Event timeframe is the month of the event and the two consecutively following months. If the form is submitted after that window of time, then you would need to wait until Open Enrollment to add the child. So, please; submit the Change in Status form, even if you do not have the Birth Certificate yet.

Maybe now you’re asking, “Surely there is a more simple way to do this?!”

Yes, actually, there is! You can log onto the PEIA website <https://peia.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx> and select the Manage My Benefits option.

If you are already registered as a user for the Manage My Benefits site, then you log in and follow the steps to submit your online Change in Status to add your newborn. There is even an option to upload your documentation online. If you are not already registered to use the Manage My Benefits site, you can do so by selecting Manage My Benefits and then clicking the



link to register and following the steps to complete registration and complete your Change in Status online.

“OH, but wait! What if I want to add my newborn to Dependent Life Insurance? Or to Dental and/or Vision? Can I even do that?!”

Never fear: You can also add them to those coverages.

To add the newborn to Dependent Life, simply indicate on the Change in Status form (whether online or by paper form) that you also want to add Dependent Life Insurance for your newborn.

To add the newborn to Dental and/or Vision, you’ll need to complete the FBMC Enrollment form for the current plan year. Your District or Division HR Associate who assists with Benefits will be able to help you get this form. Unfortunately, there is not an online option for FBMC at this time.

For more questions, you may contact your District or Division office’s assigned Benefits contact.

Did you find this article to be helpful in any way? Then, stay tuned for future “Pondering the Mysteries of Benefits” articles in your DOH Newsletter.



Beautiful Job!

Dear Mr. Ware:

I write to thank you and your crew for an excellent job installing a culvert on our property yesterday (8/5/21) to redirect road-runoff.

The crew showed up in a timely fashion and, as I can attest from personal witness, they worked very professionally and diligently together to produce a beautiful result! They were also quite personable and accommodating – so much so, in fact, that we invited those who were interested in fishing to come and fish for trout in Evitt’s Run from our property when they wished to do so. (From what I’m told, we have some very nice trout in the Run!)

Their work has been instrumental in preserving, not only our driveway, but the historic waterwheel located on our property, the safety of which had been compromised by uncontrolled road-runoff. You have our sincere thanks, as well as the gratitude of so many local people who love the wheel – and of generations to come.

With warm regards and appreciation,

Barbara Ingersoll

Charles Town



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.

Daniel Ellars—Traffic Engineering

Ronie Hall—Human Resources

Mike Evans—District 8

John Davis—District 8

Alan Reed—State Highway Engineer

Tom Jones—District 1

And a special one, awarded by Jimmy Wriston;

**Byrd White—Secretary of
Transportation**

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.



Checking Progress on US 35

West Virginia Department of Transportation Secretary Byrd White and Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., paid a surprise visit to the contractors working on the final stretch of Route 35 on Tuesday, August 10, 2021.

The pair spoke with workers, laid eyes on the progress of the work and Deputy Secretary Wriston drove the big paving machine - which is wide enough to pave two lanes at once.

This important project, which would not have been possible without funding from Governor Jim Justice's Roads to Prosperity Program, has been a goal of West Virginia Division of Highways since the 1980's. When complete, the road will improve safety by taking traffic off the existing, heavily traveled, two-lane section of Route 35.

Contractors are putting the final layer of asphalt on the last 14.6-mile section of the four-lane upgrade of US 35 and installing guardrail along the route. Temporary lighting for crossovers is also ready for installation. West Virginia Division of Highways is working with the Department of Environmental Protection to move sediment control devices to allow paving the medians.

Yet to come are installing signs along the route, paving the new interchanges where the new stretch of highway will tie in to the existing four-lane sections of US 35 and paving beneath the bridges on the route. Once finished later this fall, US 35 will

be four lanes all the way from Interstate 64 near Teays Valley to the West Virginia-Ohio state line.



WVDOH Keeping Tabs on Corridor H

WVDOH Assistant Deputy State Highway Engineer for Construction Tommy Collins, P.E., and Chief Engineer of Construction Todd Rumbaugh, P.E., were among eight WVDOH officials who recently hopped on helicopters to tour sites along Corridor H.

The delegation visited both ongoing construction areas and planned future areas of construction to check on progress of the much-anticipated Appalachian Corridor.

In the photograph below, Rumbaugh is walking on the site where a new bridge will cross the Cheat River in Tucker County,



DOH Honors Longtime Instructor

WVDOH recently honored longtime bridge safety inspection instructor Denny Baughman for decades of service training Mountain State bridge inspectors.

At what was almost certainly his last training course in Huntington, DOH National Bridge Inspection Standards program manager Chad Robinson presented Baughman with a cake and thanked him for his dedication and inspiration in training new bridge inspectors. Baughman, a Pennsylvania native, has been teaching training courses for would-be bridge inspectors in West Virginia since the early 1990s.

“He’s been a really solid instructor,” Robinson said. “He takes great pride in the work that he does in teaching.”

Although he retired in 2017, Baughman continued to teach bridge inspection courses. The courses, developed by the Federal Highway Administration and National Highway Institute, are required for anyone who wants to become a certified bridge inspector.

“It’s a 10-day course, eight hours a day, which teaches everything about bridge inspection,” Baughman explained.

The course teaches standardized inspection techniques applicable to any public bridge in the United States, necessary for compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards, or NBIS. NBIS came about as a direct result of the 1967 collapse of West Virginia’s Silver Bridge, and is designed to ensure bridge safety all over the country.

Baughman has taught bridge inspection courses in 45 states. He likes teaching them in West Virginia.

“I can relate to West Virginia,” he said. “I feel comfortable here because I grew up in the mountains of Pennsylvania.”

Robinson said Baughman is a thorough and patient instructor, who takes care to fully answer even the most simplistic or rudimentary questions from students.

Dry and matter-of-fact in conversation, Baughman’s eyes light up a little bit when he talks about one of his keen interests – covered bridges.

“Whenever a state has covered bridges, I go out and try to find them,” he said. “I can’t get to them all, but I try to see as many as I can.

“They’re historic,” Baughman said. “They’re a sign of simpler times.”

Robinson and the rest of DOH wish Baughman the best as he continues his journey.

