

WV DOT Today!

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We Look at Fall, Winter Rail Excursions



Also, Governor Morrissey Walks His Mountaineer Mile With The WV DOT, I-79 and Jefferson Road Widening Projects Complete



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Governor Morrisey Host Mountaineer Mile Along Side WVDOT

On Wednesday, August 13, 2025 Gov. Patrick Morrisey hosted a special Mountaineer Mile with the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT). Since May, the WVDOT has been holding their own Mountaineer Miles three times a week to support the governor's health initiative, and to show his gratitude Morrisey wanted to walk one with the department. Morrisey expressed his appreciation to all the state workers and citizens who have been participating in the mile since he announced this initiative back in April. He also took a moment to thank state workers for all the hard work they put in serving the citizens of West Virginia.

The weather was hot but the skies were clear as everyone waited for the governor's arrival. The mile began in the front of Building 5 around 10:30 a.m., with a great turnout of walkers. Morrisey led the mile with the Secretary of Transportation Stephen Todd Rumbaugh.

The procession headed down California Avenue to the Kanawha Boulevard and back down Greenbrier Street, finishing back in front of Building 5. Morrisey and Rumbaugh then gave high fives to all the participants.

The message was very clear: the health of every West Virginian is a top priority for this governor, and the WVDOT is also making it their priority to support this health initiative as well.



WVDOT Today!

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

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Discover the Magic of Fall and Winter on West Virginia's Scenic Rails

Dear Friends and Adventure Seekers,

Greetings from the West Virginia Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities! As the seasons shift from the vibrant hues of autumn to the serene beauty of winter, our state-owned rail systems offer unforgettable tourism opportunities that showcase the natural splendor of Almost Heaven. Whether you're chasing the fiery colors of fall foliage or seeking cozy winter escapes amid snow-dusted mountains, our historic trains and innovative railbiking adventures provide immersive experiences for families, nature lovers, and history enthusiasts alike. We're proud to partner with operators like the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad and others to maintain these treasures, which run on state-owned lines and promote amazing tourism opportunities. Let's explore the highlights, starting with the spectacular fall excursions and transitioning into winter wonders.

Fall Foliage Extravanzas: A Symphony of Colors

West Virginia's Appalachian landscapes explode with reds, oranges, and golds in autumn, and our rail journeys offer front-row seats to this natural spectacle. These excursions typically run from September through early November, providing ample time to catch peak foliage. Here's a spotlight on each:

- Cass Scenic Railroad:** Board a historic steam locomotive in Cass for a 4.5-hour round trip to Bald Knob, the third highest point in the state at 4,700 feet, where panoramic views of colorful forests await. This ride through the Monongahela National Forest is a must for leaf peepers, with fall rates starting September 17, 2025, and excursions available from May to October. Unique features include the sounds of original Shay locomotives and stops for photos amid the changing leaves.



- Durbin Rocket:** This charming 2-hour steam-powered ride departs from Durbin, chugging along the Greenbrier River through remote wilderness. In fall, the 1920s-era coaches frame stunning mountain scenery blanketed in autumn colors, making it ideal for a relaxed outing with wildlife sightings possible. It's a gentle, rhythmic journey perfect for all ages.

- Greenbrier Express:** Departing from Cass, this excursion heads to the High Falls of Cheat, offering a 5-hour adventure with onboard narration and views of cascading waterfalls surrounded by fall foliage. Fall rates begin September 17, 2025, and the route through the national forest is especially vibrant in October. Enjoy climate-controlled cars and optional dining for added comfort.

- Tygart Flyer (New Tygart Flyer):** From Elkins, embark on a 4-hour diesel-powered wilderness trip featuring steep mountain grades, an "S" curve tunnel, a high bridge over the Shavers Fork River, and a stop at the High Falls of Cheat. The densely forested canyon views are breathtaking in fall, with operations running from April to early November—prime time for foliage photography.

- Potomac Eagle:** Based in Romney on the state-owned South Branch Valley Railroad, this 3-hour trip ventures through The Trough—a remote canyon accessible only by train, boat, or foot. Fall foliage excursions run daily from October 1-28, 2025, with departures weekdays and weekends, featuring bald eagle sightings amid vibrant autumn landscapes. Onboard dining and historic narration enhance the experience.

- Rail Explorers Railbiking Adventures:** For a hands-on twist, pedal custom railbikes along the historic Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad in Clay County near Elk River. The 12-mile, 2-hour round-trip tours include the Buffalo Creek Cruise (daytime) and Lantern Cruise (dusk), passing the Devils Sawmill waterfall and rebuilt Sandfork Bridge. In fall, the electric-assist propulsion makes it easy to enjoy the colorful scenery, with options for morning coffee or brunch tours. It's a family-friendly, active way to connect with nature.



Discover the Magic of Fall and Winter on West Virginia's Scenic Rails Continued

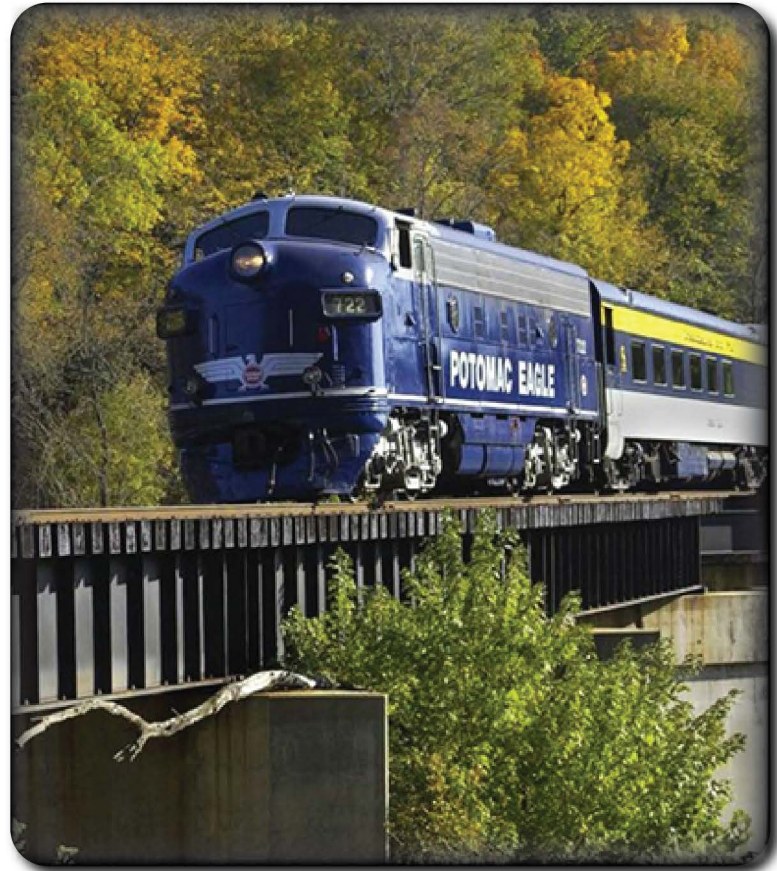
Winter Wonders: Cozy Rides and Holiday Magic

As fall gives way to winter, our rails shift to snowy vistas, holiday-themed specials, and peaceful escapes. While some excursions pause for the season, others shine with winter charm from December through February.

- Greenbrier Express Winter Special:** Transform your winter weekend with rides from Cass to Durbin. Enjoy heated coaches, hot beverages, and views of the snow-covered Monongahela National Forest on this 5-hour historic steam journey.

- Potomac Eagle North Pole Express:** Head to the "North Pole" for a festive holiday adventure, complete with Santa visits, storytelling, and seasonal treats. This winter staple offers a magical 3-hour ride through wintry canyons, with wildlife spotting and onboard merriment—perfect for creating family memories.

- Additional Notes on Winter Options:** The Cass Scenic Railroad serves as a hub for winter departures like the Greenbrier Express, while the Durbin Rocket and Tygart Flyer may offer limited pop-up events—check official sites for updates.



These experiences not only highlight West Virginia's stunning geography but also support local economies and preserve our rail heritage. Tickets sell out quickly, especially for peak fall weekends and holiday specials, so book early and plan ahead! For bookings and more details:

- Cass Scenic Railroad, Greenbrier Express, Durbin Rocket, and Tygart Flyer: Visit mountainrailwv.com

- Potomac Eagle: Visit potomaceagle.com

- Rail Explorers: Visit railexplorers.net/tours/elk-river

We look forward to welcoming you aboard. Safe travels, and may your journeys be filled with wonder!

Warm regards,

The West Virginia Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities

Major Work Complete on Jefferson Road Widening Project

All lanes on the new bridge connecting Jefferson Road with US 60 and Corridor G (US 119) in South Charleston are now complete and a five-lane upgrade of Jefferson Road is now open to traffic.

Contractors Kokosing Construction completed final paving and striping on the last section of the Jefferson Road upgrade project on Friday, August 29, 2025, and began pulling up traffic cones.

In April 2019, Kokosing was awarded a contract for \$46.8 million to design and build the five-lane upgrade. In addition to widening Jefferson Road to five lanes between US 60 in South Charleston and Corridor G, the project replaced a congested dogleg intersection and rail crossing at the intersection of Kanawha Turnpike and Jefferson Road with a new bridge and roundabout. Heavy growth along Corridor G has led to growing congestion on Jefferson Road, especially during the holiday season and on weekends.

In September 2021, Triton Construction Inc. was awarded a contract for more than \$10.9 million to build a connector road from Jefferson Road to RHL Boulevard, which included the construction of a 420-foot bridge. The connector provided a second entrance into the Trace Fork Shopping Center and significantly reduced congestion on Corridor G and Jefferson Road.

A formal celebration and dedication of the project will be scheduled for the near future.



The Jefferson Road upgrade and RHL connector are part of a tri-tiered effort to alleviate congestion on one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the Charleston area.

In September 2021, the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) opened the state's first two RCUTs, or restricted crossing U-turns, near the Oakwood Road intersection of Corridor G. The new RCUTS cut down on wait times at the Oakwood Road traffic light and significantly reduced congestion in the mornings and afternoons when school was in session and at other heavy traffic times.

Paving of the final portions of the new bridge and Jefferson Road complete the major part of the upgrade project. Additional work to tie in the new road with driveways and access the West Virginia State Police facility and other businesses remains to be completed, but should be finished by the end of September.



Work Underway to Replace Rutledge Road Bridge in Charleston

Work is underway to replace a short span bridge on Rutledge Road in Charleston.

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) closed the bridge on Rutledge Road on Friday, August 8, 2025, after a routine bridge inspection revealed deterioration in the steel beams supporting the structure. One lane of the roughly 18-foot bridge had been closed previously.

WVDOT bridge engineers were able to expedite an emergency replacement project for the span, and expedited an agreement with the power company to move a utility line to allow access to the site. Bridge crews are currently drilling and driving pilings for the new bridge abutments.

The new bridge is expected to be complete this fall.

"This is a good example of why I have shifted our focus to attention on our bridges and other infrastructure," said Transportation Secretary Stephen Todd Rumbaugh. "This particular structure was on the list for replacement, and we were hoping it would hold out a little longer."



WVDOH Reviews Public Input From West Washington Street Project Meeting in Charles Town

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) is reviewing feedback collected during a public workshop held Tuesday, August 5, 2025, on the proposed West Washington Street improvement project in Charles Town, Jefferson County.

The meeting, hosted at the Betty J. Roper Auditorium at Wright Denny Intermediate School, drew residents, business owners and local officials interested in the planned upgrades. The open-house format allowed attendees to view project displays, speak directly with WVDOH engineers and planners, and share comments and concerns.



Proposed improvements focus on increasing roadway safety and capacity at the intersection of West Washington Street, Summit Point Road, and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The project also aims to enhance pedestrian safety and bicycle mobility throughout the corridor, supporting the long-term growth of the Charles Town area.

Crash data from 2017 to 2021 was reviewed to determine how often crashes occurred, their types and whether patterns existed. Over the five-year period, there were 51 crashes in the project area, with about 29 percent resulting in injuries. Of these, 23 occurred at the intersection of WV 51 and County Route 340/18 (Augustine Avenue), and 10 occurred at the intersection of WV 51 and County Route 13 (Summit Point Road). When compared with similar roadways across West Virginia, the crash rate in this area is nearly 2.5 times higher than the state average.

"We value the input we received from the community," said Doug Kirk, director of the WVDOH Technical Support Division. "The feedback gathered at the meeting will be carefully considered as we move forward with design and construction planning."

Residents who could not attend the workshop may submit written comments through Friday, September 3, 2025, at <http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment>.

Calling All Cones; Six-lane Section of I-79 Opens Near Fairmont

The cones are gone and a new six-lane section of Interstate 79 is now fully open near Fairmont.

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) removed traffic control devices, including traffic cones, from a three-mile section of I-79 between mile markers 132 and 135 on Thursday, August 28, 2025.

In May 2021, Pennsylvania-based Swank Construction Company was awarded a contract for \$72.5 million to widen I-79 to six lanes between the South Fairmont and Pleasant Valley exits. The project also included replacement of three bridges.

The widening is part of a larger series of projects to improve I-79 and replace or rehabilitate several sets of bridges between Harrison County and the Pennsylvania state line.

Work continues on other stretches of I-79 in northern West Virginia.



The West Virginia DMV Attends Honey Festival

This past month, DMV workers Kim Harrison and Courtney Hudson attended the 8th Annual Beckley Honey Festival, where they connected with attendees and showcased West Virginia's diverse collection of specialty license plates.

Set up at a booth, Kim and Courtney highlighted how residents can express their interests, values, and community pride through unique plate designs—including the eye-catching Honey Bee Plate, which supports pollinator awareness. In addition to this popular option, the team also promoted a wide variety of other specialty plates that support local causes, schools, veterans, and more.

Whether you're passionate about wildlife, want to honor military service, or support a favorite university, there's a plate for you!

A big thank you to everyone who stopped by the booth to learn more and check out the designs! To explore the full list of specialty license plates and find one that fits your style, visit transportation.wv.gov/DMV/Vehicle-Services/License-Plates.



Blast From The Past



Newly constructed bridge crossing Mills Creek, Fayette County, 1936.



If You Feel Different, You Drive Different. Drive High, Get a DUI.

The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), will be working alongside local law enforcement for the "If You Feel Different, You Drive Different. Drive High, Get a DUI." high-visibility enforcement campaign. The goal is to help prevent drug-impaired driving, to save lives, and to prevent serious injury. The GHSP is urging drivers to refrain from driving impaired.

"The bottom line is that no matter what the substance is, if a driver is impaired, they should not be driving," said Jack McNeely, Director of the GHSP. "We want everyone to enjoy the last weeks of summer and the Labor Day holiday. We also want everyone to understand that it's our first priority to keep people safe. Violating West Virginia's drug-impaired driving laws can have severe and lasting consequences, both financially and potentially posing a risk to life."

Many people believe that being high doesn't affect driving abilities, but they are wrong. It has been proven that marijuana can slow reaction times, impair cognitive performance, and make it more difficult for drivers to keep a steady position in their lane. In 2024, more than 30 percent of DUI arrests involved drivers impaired by drugs. In two GHSP regions, that percentage is 44 percent.

Those who plan to use drugs should not drive. Even over the counter and prescription medications can have impairing effects. Drivers should secure a designated sober driver or call a taxi or rideshare for a sober ride home.

If a driver finds they are unable to drive, they should give their keys to a sober driver so that person can get them home safely. When a friend has been using drugs and is considering driving, friends should be proactive, take away the keys, and help them get a sober ride home. If anyone spots an impaired driver, contact local law enforcement.

For more information on impaired driving, visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving.

For more information about the West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program, visit highwaysafety.wv.gov or call 304-926-2509.



Drive high, get a DUI.



Send Us Your Selfies

We have the best department of transportation in the country, and the people who work here get to see some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world. So we are hoping that you all can help us showcase that. We are asking for any employee who takes a selfie at one of our many iconic roads or bridges to send it in to us to be shared in this newsletter. Can't get out in the field? No problem. We have a New River Gorge Bridge backdrop by Secretary Rumbaugh's office in Building 5 at the Capitol complex. Take one there and send it in also. We do ask that you leave your name and a brief description of where you are.

Send all selfies to: wvdotcommunications@wv.gov, and check out future issues of WVDOT Today to see if you are in it!



West Virginia DMV Encourages Citizens to Get Their Mobile IDs

DO YOU HAVE MOBILE ID?

Convenience
Have your ID at your fingertips!

Security
Mobile ID is secured using FaceID or TouchID

Privacy
Verify your age without sharing details like your birth date or address.

Download WV Mobile ID on the Apple App Store or Google Play today!

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) encourages West Virginia residents to download the Mobile ID to their smartphones. You will be able to access your digital driver's license and ID card on your smartphone.

The West Virginia mID app will allow residents to securely store and manage their identification credentials on their smartphones. Users can verify their identity at TSA PreCheck® checkpoints at participating airports across the country, streamlining travel experiences. This digital solution is designed to simplify interactions with government agencies, businesses, and other service providers, offering a modern, secure form of identification.



New Guests Each Week!



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