

WV DOT Today!

• WV DOT Looks Back at Another Great Year • Secretary Wriston Recognizes Central Forces • WVDOH Helps Deliver Capitol Christmas Tree to Charleston

A New Year & New Travel Plaza on the West Virginia Turnpike



January 2025, Volume 7: Issue 1

WVDOH Delivers Christmas Tree From Watoga State Park.

When Gov. Jim Justice put the word out that he was looking for the perfect holiday tree to grace the State Capitol grounds, the West Virginia Division of Forestry knew just where to look. Forestry then teamed up with the Department of Commerce, General Services Division, and West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) to cut the tree and make arrangements to truck it to the state Capitol in Charleston.

The 50-foot Balsam Fir arrived at the Capitol on Wednesday, November 27, 2024 from Watoga State Forest.

Crews with the WVDOH laid in gravel and built a short log road to get a tractor trailer into the forest to haul out the tree, with the assistance of the Division of Forestry.

Dustin Loudin was part of the five-person WVDOH crew who got up at 4 a.m. to prepare the tree for transport. All were from the WVDOH Equipment Division in Buckhannon.

Loudin and the others then gingerly drove the tree out of the forest, West Virginia Turnpike, where they headed to catch Interstate 64 back to Charleston, to arrive at the Capitol Complex later that evening.



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

Editor: **Rusty Marks**
Layout and Design: **Chris Moynahan**
Submit articles, letters, suggestions, and Vision Award nominations to;
Jennifer.J.Dooley@wv.gov



WV Parkways Authority Opens Beckley Travel Plaza on Turnpike!

BECKLEY, WV — Gov. Jim Justice, along with Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., and Jeff Miller, executive director of West Virginia Parkways Authority, announced the grand opening of the Beckley Travel Plaza.

The plaza will feature Starbucks, Wendy's, Popeye's, and Mountain State Market, which will run 24/7. Other amenities offered are increased restroom facilities, EV charging stations, a drive-through, and separated vehicle and tractor-trailer fueling options.

The travel plaza will also highlight the Tamarack Artisan Shop, which is designed to support a variety of travelers, including families, tourists, and professional truck drivers. Its strategic location ensures easy access for those traveling to and from destinations across the state and beyond.

"I'm truly blown away by how this plaza has turned out—it's even more than we imagined," Gov. Justice said. "A few years ago, no one would've dreamed West Virginia would be featured in top travel guides or become a top tourist destination. Now, people from all over the world are coming to experience Almost Heaven. We needed to update our travel plazas to match the excitement and energy of our visitors, and that's exactly what we've done. This isn't just a pit stop; it's our opportunity to show off the beauty and spirit of West Virginia. This plaza represents everything that's happening in our state—growth, opportunity, and pride. Millions of travelers will pass through here and take a piece of West Virginia with them."

In May 2022, the Parkways Authority approved the expenditure of \$152 million spread over three fiscal years to revamp the Turnpike's travel plazas. Plans were based on the results of a 2021 survey of Turnpike travelers.



In February 2023, the West Virginia Parkways Authority approved a contract for around \$122 million with Paramount Builders LLC of St. Albans to demolish and renovate the Beckley and Bluestone travel plazas.

"On behalf of the WV Parkways Authority board members and staff, we are extremely excited and proud to open this world-class facility to the traveling public," Miller said. "This facility will showcase West Virginia to millions of people, and it will transform what it means to provide safe, clean, and modern roadway facilities rich with amenities to the traveling public on a national level. The WV Turnpike remains committed to providing the best user experience possible on our roadway, and this is no exception. I am grateful to our operating partner, Areas USA, for their commitment to provide our vision for this facility and to the contractor, Paramount Builders, for bringing this phenomenal facility to life."

The opening of the Beckley travel plaza and Bluestone travel plaza represent a significant investment in the state's infrastructure and economy. The Bluestone travel plaza is set to open around mid-January.

WVDOT Remembers Those Lost on the Silver Bridge



Sunday, December 15, 2024, marked the 57th anniversary of the collapse of the Silver Bridge, which connected the communities of Point Pleasant, West Virginia and Gallipolis, Ohio. The bridge collapsed without warning at 4:58 p.m., Friday, December 15, 1967, as many were scrambling to complete their Christmas shopping. The tragedy led to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968, which established a National Bridge Inspection Program which created bridge inspection standards still in use today.

“The unexpected tragic collapse of the Silver Bridge on December 15, 1967, was an alarming wake-up call for bridge owners across the nation that our infrastructure was getting older and bridge conditions needed to be assessed on a routine schedule and in a systematic way, and a large group of folks needed to be trained and educated as to what to look for and how it pertained to public safety,” said Tracy Brown, P.E., State Bridge Engineer for the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT).

At 5 p.m. Sunday, December 15, 2024, officials gathered at the site of the former bridge approach on Sixth Street in Point Pleasant to commemorate the 46 people killed in the bridge collapse. A bell was rung and names read for each of those who lost their lives on the bridge 57 years ago.

The collapse of the Silver Bridge led directly to the standardized federal National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) that all states and jurisdictions are required by law to follow.

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), West Virginia has one of the most effective bridge inspection programs in the country for the state’s approximately 7,200 bridges. Under the program, every bridge in the state is subject to detailed inspections at least every two years, and more frequently if needed.



The program works. In December 2023, a special bridge inspection on the Jennings Randolph Bridge in Chester discovered minor cracking in the T-1 steel beams that make up the bridge. The bridge was temporarily closed, repairs made, and the bridge quickly returned to service.

In November and December of this year, a special bridge inspection on the 31st Street Bridge in Huntington led to the discovery of minor deterioration in some strands of wire in two of the 62 cables that hold up the bridge. Repairs were quickly made with traffic still on one lane of the bridge, and engineers were able to remove a 20-ton weight limit that had been placed on the span.

Brown said the state’s bridge inspection program is like going for a medical checkup.

In the past few years, the WVDOT has made great strides in improving the health of its bridges. The agency has adopted a 10-year bridge maintenance plan using sophisticated computer software to track the inspection history and health of every single bridge in the state.

The plan has allowed the WVDOT to make informed, data-driven decisions about what bridges to fix, which ones to replace, and when fixing a bridge has become more expensive than replacing it with a new structure.

And it’s all directly traceable to the Silver Bridge.

“This tragedy should never be forgotten, and we should use it as a reason to reach forward and try harder in everything we do so that no one will ever have to experience anything like it again,” Brown said. “There are no shortcuts in this business. No matter what, you do whatever it takes to ensure the public’s safety.”



A Merry Christmas from Citizen to Secretary Wriston



Jimmy,

I know you mostly hear complaints from people and needs and wants but I want to throw a "thank you" at you for some work up in Wood County. My dad lives just off 9/4 and that road hasn't had a new surface since it was out down in '85. They're all extremely happy up there in the hill.

Have a Merry Christmas



Senator Manchin Thanks Charlene!



Dear Charlene,

As someone who worked closely with my Constituent Services Team, I want to take a moment to extend my deepest gratitude for your partnership in serving the people of West Virginia with the West Virginia Department of Transportation during my time in the United States Senate. Your effort have been nothing short of exceptiona, and the value of your service cannot be overstated.

Helping the people of West Virginia navigate challenges and access the resources they needed was one of the most fulfilling parts of my time in the Senate. Our approach to constituent services focused on proactive communication with agencies and individuals, ensuring we could address issues swiftly and effectively. Together, we assisted over 101,000 West Virginians, tackling concerns ranging from medical coverage and federal benefits to disaster relief and state agency matters. Your dedication and collaboration played a vital role in resolving these issues and making a real difference in people's lives.

Thank you for your friendship, for standing shoulder to shoulder with me, and for your service to our state and country. Serving West Virginia has been the greatest honor of my life.

With Warm Regards,


Joe Manchin



New Guests Each Week!



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31st Street Bridge Reopens

The 31st Street Bridge, connecting Huntington, West Virginia with Proctorville, Ohio, is reopen following a bridge inspection and minor repairs. As a result of the repairs, the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) will lift a 20-ton weight restriction from the span and return it to its full capacity.

One lane of the bridge was closed on Monday, November 4, 2024, to allow contractors to conduct an in-depth inspection of the bridge that involved opening and inspecting some of the cables that support the 1,500-foot bridge. Built in 1983, the deck of the bridge is held up by 62 cables, each made up of multiple strands of steel wire.

Every bridge in the state is inspected at least every two years, and sometimes more. In addition, specialized inspections are carried out when warranted to ensure the continued safety of the state's approximately 7,200 bridges.

"We can't ignore our bridges and pretend everything is fine," said Tracy Brown, P.E., WVDOH State Bridge Engineer. "We need to know the truth. We're not going to roll the dice and put our citizens on a bridge we know nothing about. We've got to KNOW it's safe."

The WVDOH placed a 20-ton weight restriction on the 31st Street Bridge in 2018 after noticing potential problems with some of the support cables. Engineers did several rounds of non-invasive testing on the bridge, including magnetic and acoustic testing, before deciding to bring in a consultant to look inside the cables themselves.

"This is what we do," Brown said. "Our bridge inspection program worked. We saw something, we weren't sure what it was, so we did further testing and investigation to find out."

Most of the cables looked at during the most recent cable inspection were fine. Inspectors found some minor surface rust on one section of cable, and minor deterioration on 23 of 181 individual strands of wire in another cable. Both sections of cable were cleaned, treated against further deterioration, and re-encased.

Repairs were sufficient that WVDOH engineers were confident in removing the 20-ton weight restriction on the bridge and returning it to full service.

"Our bridge inspection program works," Brown said. "We spend \$15 million a year on bridge safety inspections, and it's worth every penny."



The federal National Bridge Inspection Standards, which mandate when and how bridges should be inspected, are based on the December 15, 1967 collapse of the Silver Bridge. Sunday, December 15, 2024 will mark the 57 year anniversary of that tragedy. To ensure such a tragedy never occurs again, bridge safety inspectors work year round in all weather, climbing high and low and even inspecting bridges underwater. Coupled with WVDOH's 10-year bridge management plan for maintenance and replacement of bridges in the system, WVDOH is working to catch up years of underfunding to meet the goal of being a nationwide leader for safe bridges.

Reinvesting in "Why"



CHARLESTON – Asking ‘why’ hasn’t ever been a problem for Alex Wriston, and he credits that curiosity for where he is today.

The former physics teacher, who now serves as a maintenance assistant for the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) in District 1, recently spoke to the Marshall University Society of Physics Students on the importance of developing good problem solving skills – something he believes starts with asking questions.

Wriston’s full presentation can be found on the MU Society of Physics Students YouTube page.

“We need to move away from the stigma that asking questions is embarrassing or something to be frowned upon,” Wriston said. “I have a four year old...and he asks ‘why?’ to everything and I don’t ever want to just tell him, ‘because I said so.’”

When Wriston transitioned into his role with the WVDOH after teaching physics at the high school level in Kanawha County, he said it gave him the ability to practice what he had preached to his students while using it for the betterment of the agency and West Virginia residents.

“For me, over the last three years now, it has reignited a spark in me of asking ‘why’ because now I get to do what I’ve been talking about,” Wriston said. “The day-to-day for me is very exciting because it’s always solving something new or figuring out a problem.”

As a maintenance assistant, Wriston’s workload includes road inventory assessments and adjustments as well as district-wide maintenance plans for tasks such as filling potholes or mowing in District 1.



KICKIN ASPHALT

The West Virginia Department of Transportation's (WVDOT) house band, The Kickin' Asphalts, (named by Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Alanna Keller, P.E.) played the holiday luncheon for the second year in the row. The band is composed of musicians from within WVDOT who practiced after work to present a selection of holiday and highway songs. It's all thanks to Kelley McClannahan, the band's leader.

"Kelley is an absolute rock star of a band director," said Jennifer Dooley, the bass player. "She knows the balance of how to bring out the best in a team of co-workers who have just put in a work day and gathered to practice before heading home. With Kelley as our band director, it instantly felt like playing music with family. It felt like home."

McClannahan, who works in the Training and Development Section of the Human Resources Division, studied to become a band director. She brings her love of teaching and of music to the WVDOT.

A band of co-workers, The Kickin' Asphalts, welcomed anyone willing to put in the effort to attend all practices. Honoring the West Virginia spirit of pride, hard work, and comradery, the band continues to grow.



Congratulating Central Forces on all Their Many Accomplishments!

Cenforce – (Central Forces) based out of the Central Office, is a statewide heavy maintenance and construction group that handles high priority special projects, bridge construction and repair, building and grounds projects, railroad maintenance, and any other project that requires high performance and efficiency. In 2024 they took on 43 construction projects, helping to change the infrastructure of our state, while helping to save valuable revenue in smaller project costs throughout the year.

On Wednesday, December 18, 2024, Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., and Jake Baumgartner P.E., Chief Engineer of Special Programs, invited Cenforce workers to the central office in Charleston. Cenforce workers got to attend "Cookies with the Secretary" our annual holiday celebration, before attending the 2024 projects in review, taking a look back at all they have accomplished this year.



In Babcock State Park Cenforce workers undertook a project building a new stairway, bridge and rebuilt closed trail, to help visitors navigate on one of the many hiking trails around the park. When this project was completed there was a ceremony attended by Wriston and Gov. Jim Justice. The project cost WVDOT \$718,510 instead of the \$3 million it would have cost with an outside contractor.

Cenforce also took on a huge undertaking with the construction of the Trout Run Bridge. Workers built a new bridge that is a part of the Cass Scenic Railroad, one of the biggest tourist attractions in the state. The WVDOT spent a total of \$909,892 completing this project. Without Cenforce it would have cost us \$10 million dollars for this project alone.

Out of 16 of the 43 projects Cenforce completed this year, they spent a total of \$6 million versus a whopping \$31 million. The WVDOT is appreciative of all the hard work, time, and dedication Cenforce puts into every project!



WVDOT Decorates Tree For Holly Jolly Brawley!



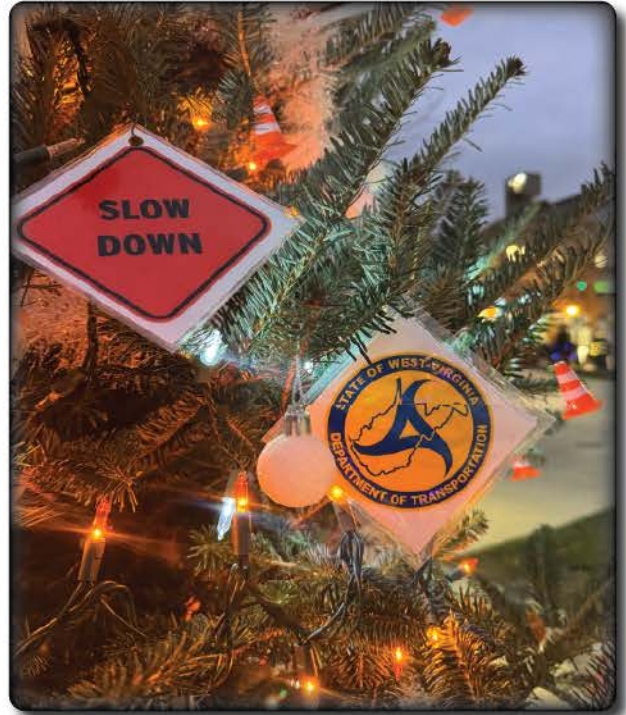
The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) was proud to participate in the city of Charleston's Holly Jolly Brawley event this year.

WVDOT had one of the almost 200 Christmas trees in downtown Charleston along Brawley Walkway and Slack Plaza. The work zone safety-themed tree has cone ornaments, orange and white lights, WVDOT logos, and Slow Down signs on it.

"This is a great opportunity to show off our holiday spirit while sending a message about the importance of work zone safety," said Jake Flatley, Transportation Public Information Specialist.

The tree is topped by a sign that reads "Roads = Jobs".

The tree will be up into the early new year.



District 10 was in the Holiday Spirit!



The West Virginia Department of Transportation's (WVDOT) District 10 headquarters was definitely in the holiday spirits this season. On Tuesday, December 10, 2024 they held a office-wide decoration contest. Various cubicals were highly decorated throughout the entire headquarters. The decorations were then judged by representatives from the city of Bluefield.

Then to follow on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 they had an office holiday party. It offered food, drinks and even a Family Feud game to wrap it up. Santa Clause even made an appearance to wish all the workers happy holidays into the new year.



West Virginia Turnpike Exceeds Estimated Travel Numbers



Travel on the West Virginia Turnpike exceeded expectations during Thanksgiving week, the West Virginia Parkways Authority announced.

The estimated number of transactions on the Turnpike was 715,000. The actual number of total transactions was 754,405.

The heaviest travel days were Wednesday, November 27, 2024, with 160,934 transactions, and Sunday, December 1, 2024, with 157,473 transactions. The least traveled day was Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 28, 2024, with 67,724 transactions. That still exceeded the estimate of 67,500.

"We had more travel than was expected, which is a great thing, and we pushed cars through the toll facilities better than we have ever done in the past, and all thanks to our new tolling system, which allowed us to run all lanes on E-ZPass/ Toll By Plate when we had backups during peak travel times," said Jeff Miller, executive director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority.

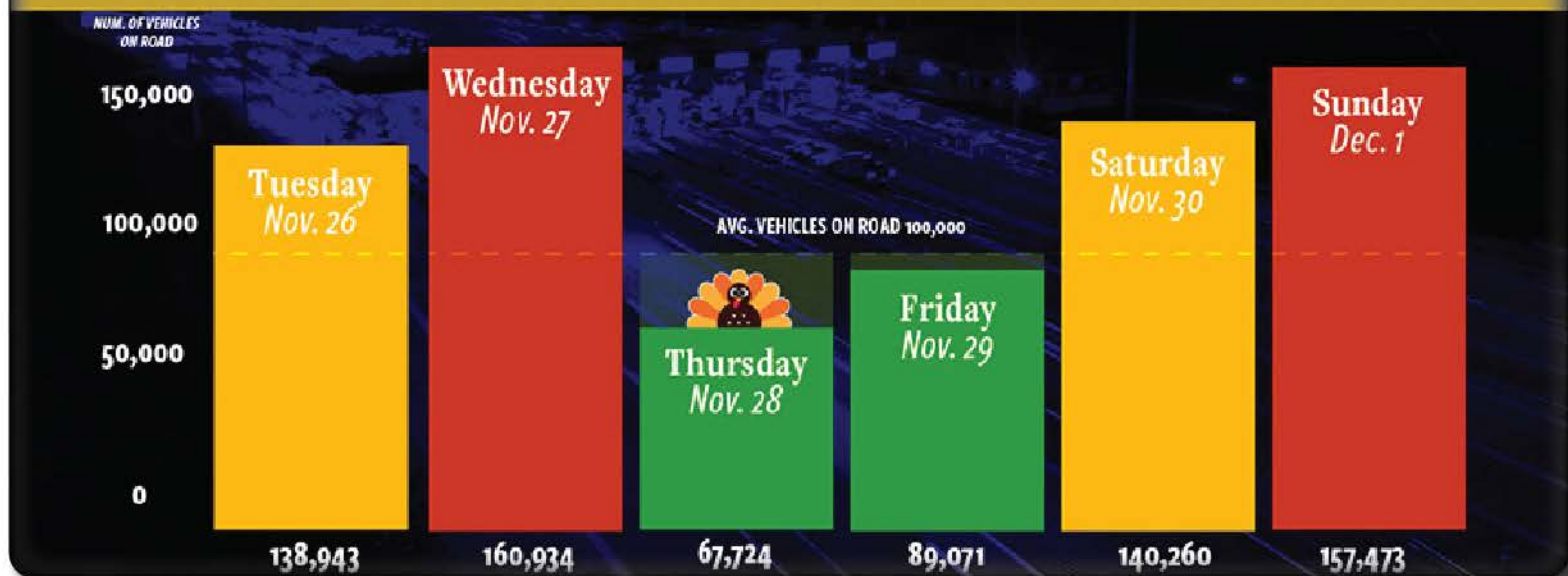
"It was incredibly efficient," Miller said.

"The system operated exactly as we expected it to and allowed the tolling operations department to really move traffic through there during heavy travel times, significantly reducing the wait time for patrons at the toll booths," Miller said. "That is our goal. To reduce the time you wait at a toll booth. If you elected to use our Toll by Plate option this week, just remember you have 30 days from that date to go to our website and pay the toll due. Sign up for an E-ZPass while you're on there!"

To get an E-ZPass, or to renew an existing E-ZPass, click [HERE](#). Drivers may also apply in person at the West Virginia Parkways Authority E-ZPass Customer Service Center, 3310 Piedmont Road, Charleston, West Virginia 25306, or at the Beckley Customer Service Center located at 12 Pikeview Drive, Beckley, West Virginia 25801.

The tolls for passenger vehicles are \$4.25 per plaza.

FINAL TRAVEL NUMBERS: *West Virginia Turnpike* *Thanksgiving Week, Nov. 26-Dec. 1*



WVDOH Gets New Paving Testing Truck



Thanks to the hard work and collaboration between the Materials Control Soil and Testing Division, Pavement and Purchasing staff, Equipment Division, and our Purchasing Division, the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has successfully acquired a brand-new High-Speed Inertial Profiler (smoothness tester, for those not in the know). This new piece of equipment, valued at approximately \$186,000, replaces our old truck and will play a critical role in our efforts to ensure the highest quality of pavement on West Virginia's roadways.

The process began in mid-April 2024, with required approvals and signed documents completed by mid-May 2024. The purchasing document, along with approvals, was then submitted to the Procurement Department in Building 5. After review and approval, the documentation was sent to the Equipment Division by June 2024.

The purchase of the Inertial Profiler was a true "OneDOT" effort, bringing together multiple departments to get this crucial tool out to bid and into our hands.

"It is a normal process to work with the procurement team in Building 5, but it was totally different to work with a division that was completely separate from us and located elsewhere from Charleston," said Wanda Casto, Transportation Division Manager 2. "Thankfully working with the Equipment Division Supervisor JD Haller, and Purchasing Assistant Pamela Hall, was a very easy task. They were great to respond to questions and kept us updated on changes of the status."

This wasn't just another piece of equipment—it's an investment in efficiency, accuracy, and ultimately, better roads for the people of West Virginia.

"Thanks to the outstanding teamwork of everyone involved in the process, it went faster and smoother than I ever could have imagined," said Stefanie Elliott, Transportation Assistant Division Director of the MCS&T Division.

"Our new truck is a significant upgrade from the previous model," Elliott said. "The High-Speed Inertial Profiler allows us to more accurately assess pavement smoothness, which is essential for ensuring that roads meet the necessary standards for safety and comfort. This new truck brings a new level of precision and efficiency to the testing process, helping us to improve the quality of the infrastructure we rely on every day."

A huge thanks to everyone involved in making this happen—everyone's hard work has made a significant impact, and we're looking forward to seeing the benefits of this new addition in the months to come. Here's to smoother, safer roads ahead!



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words!



Robin A. Gump, District 6 Human Resource Specialist and Training Coordinator, snapped a stunning photo on WV 86 in Marshall County. We just wanted to share the photo with everyone in the West Virginia Department of Transportation, (WVDOT).

We love to see lovely scenic roads from around the state. If anyone gets a photo they feel is newsletter -worthy, please email wvdotcommunications@wv.gov. We would love to share it with everyone.



A Big Thanks to the Workers who Helped with Wreaths Across America Event



Tammy Keefer

Andy Estep

Kevin Garrett

Dallas Angel

Steven Holmes

Douglas Brown

Jackie Blankenship

Brian Lambert

District 3 Safety Awards

District 3 wants to give a big congratulations to Pleasants County and Pennsboro-Ritchie County for winning 2023 safety awards. Great job to everyone and the West Virginia Department of Transportation wants to remind everyone that safety is one of its top priorities.



Section One- Pennsboro-Ritchie County



Pleasants County



WVDOT Christmas Tree & Basket Winners!



Human Resources wants to extend our sincere gratitude to every employee for their enthusiastic participation in the Annual Canned Food Drive and the Twinkle Tinsel Tree contest. The generosity and creativity truly made these event a true success.

The Canned Food Drive contributions totaled 1,306 perishable items and \$252.00 cash donation, that was given to the Mountain Mission. Also, 381 cans and bags of dog food which was donated to the Salvation Army.

Basket Winners:

Overall- Executive Division

Most Original- Legal Division

Most Creative- Operations Division

Executive Choice- Traffic Engineering Division

Overall Trophy Winner- Engineering, District Nine

Tinsel and Twinkle Tree Winners:

Most Original- Public Relations, District Nine

Most Creative- Public Relations, District Nine

Prettiest- Engineering, District Ten

Executive Choice- Information Technology Services, District Seven

Overall Winner Trophy- Engineering, District Nine

We also wanted to thank Human Resources for setting up these contests and for all the hard work they put in decorating and hosting Cookies with the Secretary of Transportation. It was a great time and lots of fun for every employee in attendance.



EXCELLENT WORK



WVDOT Thanks All the Workers Who Help Transport the Christmas Tree!



The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) wants to recognize the Division of Highways workers who helped transport this year Capitol Christmas tree to Charleston.

From Equipment Division:

Dusty Loudin, Jacob Johnson, Jimmie Robinson, Tyler Johnson, Thomas Haun, Breanna Moore, and Ed Burnside.

From Cenforce:

Scott "Skippy" Cooper, John Fouch, Daniel Mcle, Marcus Allen, and Greg Roy.

District 1:

Doug Wooten.

District 2:

Sam Egan and Steven Wallace.

VISION AWARDS

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

Rebecca Huffman - Right of Way Division

Briana D. Fisher - Human Resources

Jessica A. Legg - Human Resources

Mai M. Elsaeyd - Human Resources

Morgan Howell - DMV

Kathryn Givens - Investigations

Stephanie Elliot - Materials

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.



District 9 Holiday Donation to Greenbrier County Humane Society!

District 9 celebrated the holidays by donating to the Greenbrier County Humane Society. Wish list items were collected, including dog and cat food, cat litter, collars and leashes, cleaning supplies, and food bowls, among other items. A monetary donation was also presented to the Humane Society. If anyone is considering a pet this holiday season, please check with your local Humane Society, your forever pet may be waiting!

District 9 staff donated the items below to the Greenbrier County Humane Society.

292 gallon zip lock bags

96 quart zip lock bags

20 (13) gallon garbage bags

2 containers of dawn detergent

2 rolls paper towels

1 clorox wipes

2 gallons bleach

3 cans lysol spray

6 Little Cesar dog food pouches 1.76 ounces

1 Maro Snacks 50 ounces

1 Old Roy Munchy Bones 21 count

12 pound bags of cat food

12 pound bags of dog food

Cat litter

And we have collected \$230 to purchase needed items. Items purchase and added to the items above before delivery to GCHS for use.



Congratulations, Rita and Lorrie!



Rita Pauley:

A new set of rules is nothing for the now-retired Assistant Commissioner of Highways, Rita Pauley.

After her work to rewrite and update hundreds of personnel policies for the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) – exemplary effort which led to her becoming the first employee from the Mountain State to earn the President’s Award from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) – Pauley is now focused on learning how to enforce rules in an entirely different field after retiring from the WVDOT.

“I’m going to learn to officiate volleyball because my husband officiates basketball, volleyball and softball, so that’s something we could do together,” Pauley said.

Following two decades on the legislative side of government, her transition to the WVDOT was made easier by having that experience. Instead of just visiting the offices on the first floor of Building 5 at the Capital Complex during the Legislative session as she once did, Pauley made it her home.

“Now, I know more about highways and what goes on here than I would have ever learned if I had stayed in the legislature,” Pauley said.

By helping transform the policy manual, it took her understanding of the agency to an even deeper level, an area of expertise which Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., said will surely be missed.

“Coming here, I had no idea what the districts would do and slowly I picked up more information to realize that that’s the heart and soul,” Pauley said.

But she has no doubt that the staff she’s leaving won’t miss a beat as they enter a new year without her around.

“I think the whole staff of the agency has stepped up and works at a new level,” Pauley said. “We exist to help the traveling public and other citizens, so that they can have a safe road to travel.”

Lorrie Hodges:

Tears swelled up in the eyes of Lorrie Hodges, but she wiped them away just before they fell.

For Hodges, who has spent more than three decades with the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), the emotion came from a place of thanksgiving, not of sadness and her retirement date drew closer.

“It’s bittersweet,” Hodges said.

From an eager office assistant learning under Sharon Hayes, to the executive assistant to the cabinet secretary, Hodges has seen several assistant commissioners come and go, served under five transportation secretaries and an equal number of governors during her tenure with the agency.

Transportation secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., went so far as to call Hodges “the face of the DOT” during a retirement party before the holidays, but she claims that’s only because people see before they get to Wriston’s office or because she’s a frequent attendant at conferences and other events.

“After so many years of going, if I don’t go, they want to know where I’m at,” Hodges said with a grin.

Mission accomplished.

Now, it’s time to relax as much as one who has spent the last 30-plus years working hard knows how.

“I’m gonna take some time off and then probably work part-time somewhere,” Hodges said. “Of course, I live on a farm but my husband is the farmer, my sister is the farm helper and I’m the one that stays around the house and does flowers.”



District 6 Donates to Local Shelter



District 6 did a donation collection over the last couple weeks of December for the local Marshall County Animal Shelter. We had a late start but still received a lot of gifts for the animals at the shelter! That proves it is never too late to make a difference!

Kennel Tech Mark along with Patty, made an appearance to collect the goods. Also pictured are Jason Baker, District 6 Human Resources Manager, and Melinda Smith, Construction Secretary. Her idea was selected as the project for Christmas 2024.



Great Job District 1 for the Quick Response!



West Virginia House of Delegates member Andy Shamblin wrote a letter of commendation for District 1 employees for their quick work on a crack that arose on WV 622 bridge that leads into Nitro Marketplace. District 1 employees solved this issue quickly mitigating prolonged delays in the area and getting traffic flow back to normal.

Secretary Wriston,

I wish to extend my formal thanks to the department for the speedy resolution of a problem that unexpectedly arose.

Less than 24 hours ago, I was contacted by many constituents regarding a crack that opened on the WV 622 bridge leading to the Nitro Marketplace.

I contacted Stefan White, who immediately reacted by sending someone to inspect the issue. Within the next 12 hours, several district 1 employees worked expeditiously to mill and repave the affected area while keeping one lane open for traffic.

This route is critical to our area as it leads to the Walmart shopping area. This quick work ensured that there were minimal traffic disruptions in an area that is already plagued by them on a regular basis.

Thank you once more for the speedy resolution of this issue. I am thankful for the many dedicated workers who worked to resolve this problem which was of paramount importance to my district.

Andy Shamblin



The Best of Babydog!



West Virginia LTAP 2024 Work Zone Sign Package Recipients!

Congratulations to our 2024 Work Zone Sign Package recipients!

City of Belmont
Town of Clendenin
Town of Gauley Bridge
Town of Man
City of Milton
City of Montgomery
Town of New Haven
City of Ronceverte
Crab Orchard-MacArthur PSD
Valley Falls PSD

The goal of the Work Zone Sign Package Program is to help West Virginia transportation agencies improve safety in their work zones for motorists and roadway workers. Each package consists of traffic control devices that communities can use to warn and guide traffic around and through road construction and maintenance zones. Including this year's group of recipients, the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program has awarded 116 packages to state municipalities since the program began in 1996.



Public Relations Welcomes New Employee Luke Greasy!



Luke Greasy joins the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) as an Internal Public Information Specialist after six years as a reporter for HD Media, which owns The Herald-Dispatch and Charleston Gazette-Mail. He worked in both news and sports departments while employed at the newspaper and said he's excited to use the skills he developed early in his professional career to help him in his new role with the WVDOT.

Welcome

2025 Bridge Design and Build Contest



West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest



You have until Friday, February 28, 2025, to qualify for this year's Bridge Design and Build contest. The contest is a great way for middle and high school students to show their engineering and design skills with a chance to win prizes. The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), teamed up with WVU Tech, hosts the event yearly as a way to promote engineering to students as a career. If you would like to sign up or get more information about this year's event, please visit: wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com.



A Look Back on 2024 at the WVDOT!



WVDOT: Something To Be Proud Of!



A Look Back on 2024 at the WV DOT!



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