

Director's Board Report
October 2016

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

Introduce Beth . . .

I recently began holding director visits with the employees at headquarters.

So far, I have met with employees in the Division of Administration, the Division of Human Resources, the Division of Aeronautics, and the Office of Communication.

I will report on those meetings next month.

I completed all the district visits, wrapping up with District 4.

I would like to thank District Engineer Devin Rigby and the District 4 staff for hosting the director visit in September.

Devin and his employees shared some great insights and innovations with me.

Here are a few of the items they shared.

They developed a system to dispense diesel exhaust fluids at the fuel pumps in Shoshone.

Mechanic Jon Bolton built a system to pump from the bulk tank in the service station to the outside location.

His system reduces time at the pump and is a good way to make sure the fuel tank is full.

Another innovation they shared was a new way to advance projects with environmental and wetland impacts by utilizing state funding to purchase credits in a wetlands bank.

The credits can be used for project mitigation at a later date for federally-funded projects.

They purchased several acres of wetlands credits near Grove Creek in Blaine County, which allowed projects in the area to progress without delay, while mitigation efforts are still in process.

One of their staffing-related innovations involved working toward full implementation of their 80/20 plan.

By utilizing what they call a "**Crew of 70**," they can ensure work is being completed in a timely manner.

In other words, the crew is all one team.
Not individual groups.

All crew members are trained to complete 80 percent of all jobs, which allows the other 20 percent to be completed by subject-matter experts.

The goal is to fully implement this program before the year 2020.

Another District 4 innovation simplifies the way they set up work zones.

To simplify the process, they created a traffic-control plan for common work areas in the Bliss and Jerome area.

The control plans allow anyone in the crew to be in charge of setting up a work zone without having to develop a new plan and get it reviewed.

This will save time and ensure consistent, safe work zones.

District 4 deals with a lot of drifting snow in the winter, so they came up with an innovative way to cut trenches through the drifts.

They now use Sno-Cats to cut trenches in major drifting zones.

The Sno-Cat is cheaper to operate and does not lead to as much ground damage as a V-Plow.

Another innovation is the use of a backup generator for traffic signals during power-outages.

This allows an ITD responder to set up a small generator and have the signal in operation and safe for traffic in as little as one to two minutes.

To showcase their next innovation, the District 4 crew put me to work.

The innovation involves using high-density foam when they place sign posts, which reduces the amount of digging and tamping they have to do.

The high-density foam is a safe and quick replacement for concrete or standard dirt compaction.

Here is a short fast-motion video, speeded up to show the entire process, from placing the sign post to mixing the expanding foam and pouring it in the hole.

The District 4 crew was not quite done with making me earn my paycheck that day.

They also had me operate their next innovation, which is a unique paint application roller they developed to apply paint with reflective beads on sections of concrete railing.

As you can see on screen, the roller fits on top of the railing and creates a nice, straight paint line.

The new roller shortens the time required to apply the paint stripes.

It can also be used for guardrail.

The district staff was even more excited to let me try out their next innovation.

This innovation is a major source of pride for them, because they are the first district in Idaho to use tow plows.

Tow plows are a trailer with a plow that attaches to a truck and follows at an angle in the right lane.

They have a salt and sand distributor and allow one operator to plow two lanes at once.

I look forward to seeing the positive results of the tow plows being used on Interstate 84 and Interstate 86 this winter.

The last innovation has to do with people.

The relatively new Shoshone East team was proud to tell me about how they created their team.

From scratch.

They brought together a group of utility craftsmen from the sign and striping areas, the bridge and building crews, and other maintenance areas.

They were proud of how well they did in their first winter together and how easily they transitioned into their summer maintenance duties.

The team members gave large amounts of credit to their foreman Carl Horn for keeping them engaged and cohesive over the last year.

Many in the crew had never operated a snow plow.

But by working together as a team, they kept their two primary routes of Idaho 75 and U.S. 93 open throughout the winter.

District 4's innovative spirit has created idea after idea, making their work easier, and the highways safer.

The way they are doing business shows that innovation doesn't have to mean "invention."

In their case, it's simple, yet effective customer-service oriented solutions that are making the biggest difference.

At every level, District 4 is using a team approach, focusing on strong communication and making decisions closer to the where the work is done.

They take great pride in working together.

And it was inspiring to see the employees in Shoshone and central Idaho sharing the excitement and the stories behind what they do.

They are finding simple solutions to complete everyday tasks more efficiently, which is at the very heart of the **Innovate ITD Program**.

In September, the Division of Aeronautics won another national award.

The National Association of State Aviation Officials presented Mike Pape with the **2016 Aviation Education Award** in San Antonio, Texas, at their annual meeting.

They were being honored for a quarter-century of promoting aviation careers to Idaho teens.

Idaho's **Aviation Career Education, or "ACE" Academy** has presented career options to teenagers since the summer of 1992.

The ACE Academy is an annual event in Boise for teenagers in grades nine through 12.

Students hear from guest speakers, take tours of aviation facilities, take part in flight simulations and planning, and get to pilot a plane, although they do not get to do a take-off or landing.

Every ACE Academy since 1997 has culminated with a fly-in to one of Idaho's pristine backcountry airstrips.

Mike Pape says the goal is to capture the attention of our youth and inspire them into action.

For the students, it's a chance to learn about the exciting careers that await them – whether it's flying a commercial airplane or operating an airport.

Over the last 25 years, the Division of Aeronautics has kept the activities up with the times and brought new technology to the forefront for the students.

This year the academy incorporated virtual reality and drones.

They are actively encouraging Idaho teens to pursue aviation careers at all levels.

They share aviation with as many students as they can, and encourage them to pursue aviation as a lifelong career.

The **2016 Aviation Education Award** is just one of several awards we have received in the past few weeks.

The Meridian Interchange Project just earned the American Society of Civil Engineers' **Outstanding Civil Service Achievement Award** for projects costing more than \$10 million.

Work to replace the Meridian Interchange, originally built in 1965, began in April of 2014.

And it opened to traffic in late 2015.

In 1965, approximately 15,000 vehicles used the Meridian Interchange per day.

Today, that number has increased to more than 133,000 vehicles.

The 2016 **Outstanding Civil Service Achievement Award** adds to the numerous honors awarded to GARVEE projects across the state.

To date, our GARVEE projects have received more than 50 awards for excellence.

Three other ITD projects are also in the news.

On September 22nd, the Idaho Business Review named three ITD projects to their **2016 Top Projects List**.

- The South Valley Connector in Pocatello.
- The Meridian Road Interchange Reconstruction on Interstate 84.
- And the North Fork Payette River Bridge project in Cascade.

The South Valley Connector also won two "Project of the Year" awards this spring, and was selected as the regional winner.

It is also a People's Choice finalist in the nationwide **America's Transportation Awards**.

The GARVEE program is also a finalist for this same award.

There are 12 projects in the finals for the America's Transportation Award, and two of them are ITD projects, which is an amazing accomplishment.

Think about it.

Out of all the transportation projects in the country, 12 projects from 10 states were selected as the best of the best, and nominated to compete for this award, and two of them are from Idaho.

We will know in a few weeks if we win the award, which is one of the highest national honors for transportation projects.

You still have an opportunity to vote.

And I encourage you to vote once a day, every day.

Right up to the deadline of Monday, October 31st.

We need everyone's help to win this.

We will keep you posted on how we do.

District 6's Denise Cooley sent me a letter about innovation that I would like to share with you.

She wrote, and I quote:

"I wanted to thank you for taking the time while you were in District 6 to come and talk with me about my file-sharing innovation.

It was a pleasure to sit and share my innovation with you.

I appreciate the time you took out of your schedule to spend with me.

ITD is a huge organization and it is very rewarding when we are recognized for our contributions."

End Quote.

Peter Hartman, the Federal Highways Administrator here in Boise, sent me a letter that I would like to share a portion of with you.

He wrote, and I quote:

"Dear Mr. Ness:

The Idaho Division wants to extend our appreciation to ITD for partnering with us to support the highway safety booth at the Western Idaho Fair this year.

The highway safety booth was staffed during the fair with the goal of educating the public on various highway safety issues and increasing seat belt use.

As in previous years, a booth in the Expo building was shared with the Division of Motor Vehicles.

The Highway Safety side of the booth focused on highway safety issues.

Volunteers distributed highway safety information and gave demonstrations on the importance of being properly restrained.

A number of people who visited the booth expressed their gratitude for the highway safety materials and the effective safety demonstration materials.

Administrator Hartman concluded by saying:

We appreciate ITD's efforts in dedicating resources to improve highway safety and willingness to partner on highway safety activities."

End quote.

Sandra Healy is a principal auditor in our Office of Internal Review.

She recently received a national award from the Association of Government Accountants known as the AGA.

The award came with a letter, that reads, and I quote:

*"Congratulations on receiving the prestigious membership award for 2016 - **Highest Overall Membership Growth Award!***

The award presented to you by the AGA National office is because of your overall involvement with the Idaho Centennial Chapter as the membership chair person.

Under your leadership, our Chapter received 52 new members during 2015-2016!

This was the highest overall growth of members in an organization of 15,000 members worldwide.

On behalf of the AGA National organization, thank you!"

End quote.

Valley County Commissioner Gordon Cruickshank sent me the following letter,

He wrote, and I quote.

"I hope your summer is going well as it is flying by.

I have been meaning to send a message thanking the Idaho Transportation Department for their construction projects that help with the infrastructure needs of Highway 55.

The work on Goose Creek Grade is coming along nicely and hopefully this will allow 53 foot trailers to access this area without a permit.

I look forward to seeing the proposed work in the Smith's Ferry area this fall to create a better roadway for the travelers.

***The Gold Fork bridge replacement is also looking good.
Nice to have the by-pass able to handle two-lane traffic so it keeps moving smoothly during construction.***

I have been appointed to one of four vice chairs of the National Association of Counties Transportation Committee.

Hopefully this will provide some additional insight on future transportation issues as they arise nationwide which in turn could help us here locally and in Idaho.

Thanks again for all your work to make the highways safe for the travelers."

End quote

I received a heartwarming letter from a lady named Marie Thompson Edelman.

She wrote, and I quote:

"I just wanted to send you a quick heartfelt THANK YOU for the flower seeds.

This is, in my opinion, a fantastic way to allow myself and others with a section of highway to make our own space and our state a more beautiful place.

I am grateful and appreciative for this wonderful opportunity!

THANKS A MILLION.

Brian, great idea!

I can't wait to see the results.

Blessings upon you."

End Quote.

Marie received the wildflowers as part of ITD's Operation Wildflower program, which has more than 60 groups who plant flowers along our state highways.

We select the seeds based on what grows best in each region.

This program encourages citizens to plant native wildflowers to promote highway beautification, and aid in erosion and weed control.

So the next time you see a patch of beautiful wildflowers growing along one of our highways, you will know they are there thanks to our highway beautification efforts, and to Idaho citizens like Maria Thompson-Edelman.

Your fellow board member Julie DeLorenzo received a letter from Boise Mayor David Bieter.

Here is a part of he had to say:

"Dear Julie,

The recent ceremony for the opening of the Broadway Bridge was a great day.

From our perspective, we couldn't have come up with a better project to illustrate our vision for varietal transportation options in Boise.

I am thankful to be collaborating with ITD as we create an atmosphere that incorporates our urban character and growing needs for transportation options.

At the City of Boise, we view everything we do through the lens of making Boise more livable.

For transportation projects, that means making sure we are providing our residents with as many real transportation options as possible.

Mayor Bieter concluded by saying:

I want to celebrate our successes, and I'm thankful for what we have accomplished with the Broadway Bridge."

End quote

I think you may remember what Mayor Bieter had to say about ITD last month at the Broadway Bridge ceremony.

But for those of you in the audience who may not have seen last month's board presentation, here is a short clip of Mayor Bieter's memorable line about ITD.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would now like to introduce Chief Deputy Scott Stokes, for his October Report.

Mr. Chairman and members of the board, this concludes my Director's report for October.