

Director's Board Report
April 2017

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

Good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

I would like to thank Dave Kuisti and the employees in District 2 for hosting the first 2017 Director visit this week.

At the beginning of the legislative session, road funding was not a top priority for many lawmakers.

But when they saw what was happening to our highway system due to the severe winter weather Idaho was experiencing, the legislature quickly understood the need to invest Idaho's roads and bridges.

And they took action by developing a funding package for state and local transportation.

As legislators debated the best way to improve Idaho's transportation funding, they relied on information and revenue projections from ITD.

During the last few weeks of the legislative Session, Mollie McCarty was a blur of activity, spending more time in the statehouse than she did in her office.

But she was not alone.

Her success this year was the result of a well-coordinated team effort.

She had a lot of support, not just from her own staff, but many others in the department who stepped up when they were needed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire team, which includes:

- **Chief Deputy Scott Stokes**
- Mollie McCarty and the **Office of Government Affairs**
- Joel Drake and the **Financial Planning and Analysis** Section
- Dave Tolman and the **Financial Services** Section
- The Office of Communication
- and all the other ITD employees who helped out

They worked long days and nights to provide the accurate information legislators needed to make informed decisions about the future of Idaho's transportation system.

The entire team did an outstanding job, and they show what ITD employees can do when the pressure is on, and the goal is in sight.

Last week, the 2017 transportation funding package they helped create, Senate Bill 1206, became law.

It provides four revenue streams for transportation funding.

First, it authorizes the Idaho Transportation department to borrow \$300 million in GARVEE bonds.

Second, it extends the General Fund Surplus Eliminator for two years, providing 50 percent of the surplus for transportation.

The other two revenue streams include one percent of sales tax and a portion of the cigarette tax going to a Congestion Mitigation Fund, which could be around \$15 to \$20 million per year in ongoing funding.

In his letter of transmittal allowing Senate Bill 1206 to become law, Governor Otter said, and I quote:

"The Idaho Transportation Department has never been more efficient, effective or motivated to succeed."

End quote.

Our job now is to efficiently turn these new funds into safer roads that improve mobility and move goods and services throughout our state.

The additional funding provided by Senate Bill 1206 is a step forward toward reducing Idaho's transportation funding backlog.

We look forward to working with state and federal officials to continue closing that gap.

And we appreciate the trust our elected officials have given us to continue making the best use of our funding.

That includes repairing our damaged infrastructure.

A near-record winter, followed by wet spring weather has damaged highways around the state.

The slide on Idaho 3 in District 2 has been an ongoing issue.

The district patched the highway west of Kendrick on March 16, and near the end of the month it shifted again, by nearly a foot

Crews from the Lewiston Maintenance station constructed temporary gravel lanes around the damaged section.

The area has dropped another six to 12 inches since the temporary lanes opened.

Geologists are continuing to monitor the slope, and the district is developing a strategy for a permanent repair.

The plan is to bring a drill rig to the damaged area to better assess the depth of the slide.

Further north in District 1, mudslides on U.S. 95 have been keeping maintenance crews busy, with slides in many locations.

One of the slides left mud on the highway 10 feet deep.

The slide on U.S. 95 just south of Bonner's Ferry is still active, and continues to move material onto the highway on a daily basis.

As you can see in the photo onscreen, the district installed a second row of concrete barriers in the northbound lane to prevent additional material from reaching the open lane.

But that wasn't enough to stop what was about to happen.

Here is a 60-second video of the event as it occurred.

Since we posted it last week, it has been viewed more than 1.6 million times.

The voices you will hear are Mathew Wilson, an ITD Land Surveyor, and Tabitha Warner, from Traffic Corp.

They arrived at the site, and heard cracking and popping noises, so to be safe, they halted traffic.

It is a good thing they did.

Here is what happened three minutes later.

Thanks to the quick thinking of Tabitha and Mathew, no one was on the road.

There is still 18 inches of snow on the slope above the slide location, so this area will not be drying out anytime in the near future.

Communication Manager Vince Trimboli appeared on KTVB Television's Viewpoint segment to discuss the impact of weather and flooding on Idaho's roads and bridges.

Here is a portion of that interview.

Most of the photos you saw in the Viewpoint interview were taken by front-line ITD workers who were on the scene.

These photos have been invaluable in sharing the issues we are dealing with around the state.

The Idaho mountains still hold a deep snowpack, so the next two months may have more highway damage in store.

A slow, cool spring will help.

Maintaining the state highway system is only one aspect of the departments duties.

We must also look forward, and plan ahead to continue enabling Idaho's economy to thrive and grow.

Idaho's primary transportation corridors will play a big part in Idaho's future.

That is especially true in the corridors that are experiencing rapid growth.

District 3 recently completed an environmental assessment on the U.S. 20 / 26 corridor from Eagle Road to I-84 in Caldwell, which is about 15 miles.

The highway's capacity has not kept pace with growth, and we are studying options for improvements out to the year 2040.

The department held two public meetings in March, one in Caldwell and one in Meridian.

Please show the video.

Traffic levels on the corridor are projected to increase dramatically.

Near the I-84 intersection, it currently carries around 20,000 vehicles per day.

That is projected more than double by the year 2040, even if we make no improvements to the highway.

If we widen the highway to six travel lanes, the traffic near Can/Ada Road is projected to be 80,000 vehicles per day by the year 2040.

This is due to the residential and business developments the improvements will attract to the area.

ITD is working with cities and Ada and Canyon counties to keep U.S. 20/26 functioning as a safe, primary east-west route in the future, and to increase economic growth in the area.

Another route where we are working closely with our local partners is U.S. 91.

Also known as the Yellowstone Highway.

The traffic signal at the corner of Oak and Yellowstone in Pocatello was heavily damaged last month after it was hit by a truck.

Within a week, workers from District 5 were ready to make repairs by installing a brand-new signal pole.

Mike Neville, the Traffic Operations Supervisor for the City of Pocatello, sent us a note about the District 5 crew that I would like to share.

He said, quote:

"I cannot recall a project that went as smoothly as this one.

"They did a great job of ensuring that the replacement pole was ready, on site, and would fit on the foundation.

"It was nice to have such successful cooperation between ITD and the City of Pocatello."

"While I do not look forward to additional poles being struck by vehicles, I do look forward to being able to work together again in the near future."

End quote.

This is the kind of service given by our maintenance crews across the state.

People in the local communities appreciate their dedication and can-do attitude.

And so do their coworkers here at headquarters.

They wanted to do something to show how they feel.

So on April 5th, a bunch of employees at headquarters wore orange to show their support for the ITD employees who work in the Danger Zone, maintaining and repairing Idaho's roads and bridges.

The called it **GO ORANGE Day**.

They even filmed a video for use on ITD's social media sites.

Let's see how it went.

Go Orange Day was a big success.

And the video will help remind drivers that when they see orange near a work zone, they need to slow down and drive cautiously.

It is an important message that we are spreading across the state.

Public Information Specialist Bill Kotowski traveled to Pocatello to host a media event with District 5 staff, the Idaho State Police, Knife River Construction, and Project Manager Dan Harelson.

The event was designed to promote work-zone safety in advance of the upcoming Interstate 15 projects.

There will nine projects worth more than \$50 million under construction this year.

The total construction cost over the 2017 and 2018 construction seasons is more than \$95 million.

Here is just one of the news stories generated by the media event.

A story by KIDK, promoting driver safety in construction zones.

This is part of an extensive public-outreach campaign that will continue through 2018, addressing Interstate 15 projects in Districts 5 and 6.

The primary message we are sharing with drivers is to

- slow down,
- pay attention,
- and have patience when driving in construction zones.

The goal is to make sure everyone gets home safely.

The department's mission statement begins with safety, and so do the jobs of our employees.

Whether they work on a maintenance crew, in an office at headquarters, or at a port of entry, safety is an important part of their daily work.

Many of them interact with the public on a daily basis.

I received a letter from Chance Ah Yee, who is a Port of Entry Inspector in District 1.

He wrote, and I quote:

" Good morning

"I thought you might be interested in a statement a Commercial driver made to me on an inspection one day.

"I forget the company name, but they were out of Spokane, Washington.

"The driver told me that their company was now coming across Idaho 58 to U.S. 95, and going south to Moscow and back to Pullman.

"The route was longer, but the extra distance was worth driving on roads that were in better shape during the winter rather than staying in Washington and traveling the shorter route."

End Quote.

There are many reasons truck traffic in Idaho is increasing.

Some companies may be choosing Idaho as a preferred route, or it could be simply due to an improving economy.

But there is no doubt the truck traffic in increasing.

The route Chance Ah Yee mentioned in his letter, Idaho 58, has experienced a 38 percent increase in truck traffic in the last five years.

Before I make the handoff to Chief Deputy Stokes, I would like to share something with the board that you may not all be aware of.

The Idaho Business Review is honoring Idaho's top business leaders of the year.

And one of our own, Chairman Whitehead, is one of the honorees.

He was chosen for this honor by a select committee of chief executives.

They rated each applicant's merits in five categories:

- **Leadership**

- **Vision**
- **Innovation and Competitiveness**
- **Financial Performance**
- **and Community Leadership.**

After all was said and done, and the tallying complete, Chairman Whitehead was chosen to be honored as an **Idaho CEO of Influence**.

The Idaho Business Review will be holding a reception, dinner, and awards event for Chairman Whitehead and his fellow honorees at the Riverside Hotel in Boise on May 23rd.

And the event is open to the public.

Chairman Whitehead and the other CEOs of Influence will also be featured in the **Idaho Business Review Magazine**, which will be published on May 26.

Congratulations Mr. Chairman, for an honor well deserved!

I would now like to introduce Chief Deputy, Scott Stokes, for his April report.

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